

THE RED RIVER SETTLEMENT AND THE ST. PAUL ROUTE, 1859-1870

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ABSTRACT

The central theme of this study is the development of communications of the Red River Settlement by way of St. Paul from 1859 to 1870. In 1859 the interests of the Hudson's Bay Company, the people of Red River, and the St. Paul business men became interlocked in the St. Paul route. The thesis submitted here is that these three parties which perpetuated trade on the St. Paul route in the decade of the 1860's helped to preserve the economic character of the relations between Red River and St. Paul.

That each party did so in a different way and for different reasons is further to be noted. The Hudson's Bay Company began to use St. Paul as a commercial outlet in 1859 because the York Factory route was no longer adequate to carry the whole trade of the Company at Red River. The result was that soon the largest part of the commerce on the St. Paul route was that of the Hudson's Bay Company. As far as transportation facilities were concerned, the main contribution of the Company was its steamboat on the Red River of the North. Furthermore, the Hudson's Bay Company strove consciously to prevent political relations from growing up between Red River and St. Paul. The people of the Red River Settlement formed the second group that had an interest in the St. Paul route. It is true that the settlers and traders of Red River really led the way in the opening of trade relations with St. Paul. This, of course, had taken

place before 1859. As in former years, the merchants of the Settlement again used Red River carts to transport their goods. However, some of their freight was carried by the steamboat of the Hudson's Bay Company. At the same time the Company frequently resorted to the use of the Red River carts. There is little indication that the people of Red River actively resisted political relations with Minnesota. On the other hand, they also failed to respond to any appeals of this nature after 1859. The fact that the Red River people were quite conscious of their being British subjects seems to have been an important factor in the determining of this question. Thirdly, there were the St. Paul business men who had a lively interest in the St. Paul route. This was particularly demonstrated by the transportation facilities that these business men held out to the Red River trade on part of the route. It was clear that St. Paul and Red River were reciprocally interested in the trans-border trade, and from this had sprung the friendly relations between the two communities. Although the St. Paul merchants would no doubt have favoured the idea of political union of Minnesota and the British Northwest, there is little evidence that they took any active steps to further this cause. Their interest throughout centred mainly on the trade that St. Paul was drawing from north of the forty-ninth parallel.

The history of the St. Paul route goes back to the beginning of the Red River Settlement in 1812. It was not long until Lord Selkirk's colonists recognized that the southern route of the colony led to American settlements, from where livestock and provisions could be imported.

Moreover, the free traders of Red River soon began to use the southern route to carry their furs and buffalo robes to the American trading posts. After 1844 there was a marked increase in the free trade in furs at Red River. This had partly resulted from the attempt of the Hudson's Bay Company to enforce its fur trade monopoly, and partly because the free traders had easy access to the American fur trading post at Pembina. The outcome of this free trade, especially after 1849, was that commerce steadily developed between Red River and St. Paul. And by the 1850's, the merchants of Red River had become largely dependent on the trade with St. Paul.

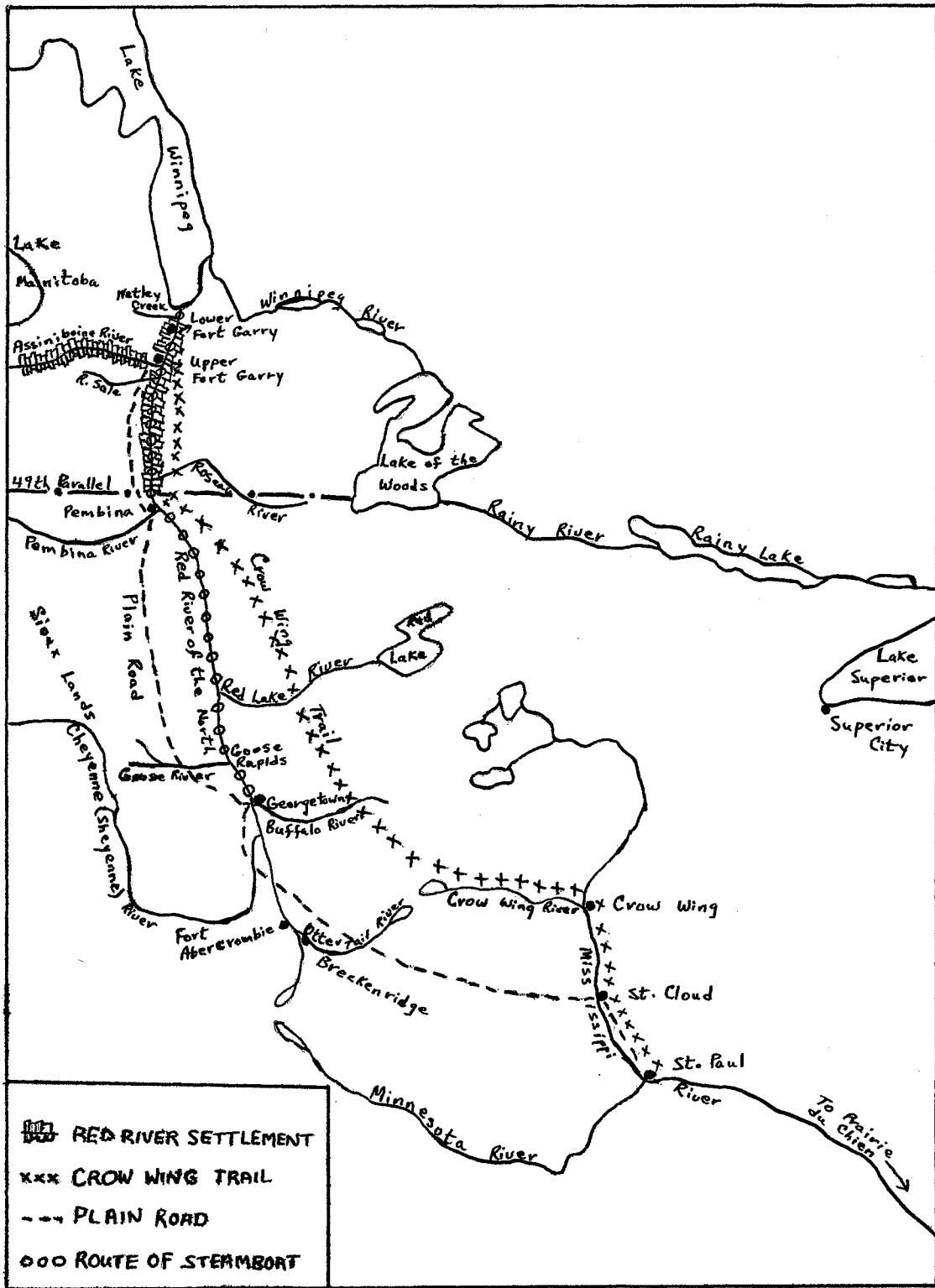
Then, in 1859, the Hudson's Bay Company together with St. Paul business men and the Red River people began to develop the St. Paul route. The result was that the southern route of Red River became the main, but not the only, line of transportation to the outside world. The York Factory route was still kept open, and the annual ship of the Company continued to come to the shores of Hudson's Bay. However, the third approach to Red River by way of Lake Superior was to fall into disuse for most of the decade of the 1860's.

By 1862, the governor and committee of the Hudson's Bay Company in London considered the St. Paul route to have become established as the principal commercial route of the Company to and from Red River. However, that year marked the beginning of difficulties along the southern route. In the first place, a problem developed in regard to the transport of freight of the Hudson's Bay Company by American contractors from St. Paul. Second, traffic on the St. Paul route was exposed to the danger of the Sioux

who had risen in Minnesota in 1862. Third, the low state of water in the Red River from 1863 to 1866 prevented regular steam navigation. By 1864 the Hudson's Bay Company had resolved its differences with the American contractors in St. Paul, and had made new arrangements for the transport of its goods by way of St. Paul. The Sioux menace was largely over by 1866. Moreover, after 1866 the steamboat of the Hudson's Bay Company again began to ply the waters of the Red. During the course of these difficulties, the Red River carts proved to be the most reliable means of travel and transport on the St. Paul route.

The Red River trade with St. Paul continued from 1866 to 1870. But in these years American annexationists hoped that the economic relations between Red River and St. Paul would be converted into a political relationship. Therefore, a second emphasis which has been introduced in this study is the matter of American interest in Red River. In a broad sense American interest after 1866 followed two not unrelated lines of thought. The first idea, which was to underlie the stronger and more lasting interest, was that commercial relations with the British Northwest should be sought after and maintained. The second idea, which was common to the annexationists, was that if the people of Red River desired political union with the United States, then Americans would be only too willing to respond to this desire. This peaceful annexationist movement, however, was weakened by lack of support in the United States and by want of interest in Red River. In the end the annexationists were to rely on the natural forces of geography and the north-south trade in the Red River valley; perhaps these would eventually operate to bring about continental union.

Although Red River continued to use the St. Paul route and maintained its commercial ties with Minnesota, in 1870 the Settlement became part of the province of Manitoba. Thus politically united to Canada, the people of Red River began a new chapter in their history.



CART AND STEAMBOAT ROUTES, 1859-1870

PART I

THE BACKGROUND OF THE ST. PAUL ROUTE, 1812-1859

CHAPTER I

OCCASIONAL TRAFFIC, 1812-1844

There was relatively little traffic between the Red River Settlement and American territory to the south from 1812 to 1844. However, the southern route was important to Red River in three main ways. First, this route was used to import seed grain, livestock, and other settlers' provisions from the Mississippi posts of St. Louis, Prairie du Chien, and St. Peter's, later to be called St. Paul. Second, the free traders of Red River used the southern trails to carry their furs over the open plains to these American trading posts. Third, the buffalo hunters of Red River moved in a southerly direction on their annual buffalo hunts.

It was the buffalo hunt that first took the colonists south. Lord Selkirk's colony, founded on the forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers in 1812, experienced an acute shortage of food in the early years. In these years the crops yielded only enough grain for seed, but not enough for food. Each winter, therefore, from 1812 to 1819 the want of food had caused the settlers to go seventy miles south to Pembina, located on the junction of the Red and Pembina rivers. Here they lived on the buffalo hunt. Then, in 1818 and again in 1819, the grain crops at Red River were destroyed by grasshoppers. Now the settlers were not only without food, but their seed grain, too, was gone.

To secure seed wheat, a party of colonists followed the approximate route that Lord Selkirk had taken on his journey through American territory in 1817. At that time Selkirk thought that the Red River Settlement would be able to get supplies with greater ease by way of the Mississippi than by the old canoe route from Canada.¹ The nearest American settlement, with the exception of Fort Snelling, a military post established at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers in 1819, was Prairie du Chien farther down the Mississippi. It was at Prairie du Chien that the settlers purchased 250 bushels of wheat in the spring of 1820. The grain was transported on three Mackinac boats up the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers and down the Red River of the North to the Red River Settlement. The principal aim of the expedition which was to get seed wheat had been achieved. A second outcome was that the settlers had discovered that the Red was navigable during high water. Thus a practicable water route joined Selkirk's colony to the American settlements to the south.²

Land communications with the United States were also to prove valuable to the colonists, especially because livestock could be driven north along the Red River valley. But the route was a long one, and the attempts to drive livestock to the Red River Settlement were to alternate

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1. J.P. Pritchett, The Red River Valley, 1811-1849 (Toronto, 1942), p. 227.
 2. A. Ross, The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress, and Present State (London, 1856), p. 51.

between success and failure. Eagerly the settlers purchased the few cows that Joseph Rolette, Sr., a former Nor'Wester, drove to the Settlement from Prairie du Chien in 1821. But Hercules L. Dousman, another trader at Prairie du Chien, twice failed to get all the way to Red River with his cattle. However, in 1822 and again in 1825, enterprising American stockmen were successful in driving cattle to the Red River Settlement from as far as Illinois. A few years later the difficulties of the route were further underlined when the settlers set out to stock the experimental farm of the colony with sheep. Out of over 1400 sheep bought by the settlers in Kentucky, only 251 reached Red River in 1833.³ The other sheep had perished on the long trip, and the trail between St. Peter's and Red River had been marked by their carcasses. Although the trip had marked the death of most of the sheep, it did not mark the end of the southern route of Red River. One of the members of the party that had gone to Kentucky for sheep was Peter Hayden. From his farm at Pembina, in later years, Hayden occasionally travelled to St. Peter's and thus helped to keep the trail to the south open.⁴

Not only settlers, however, were interested in keeping the trails to St. Peter's open. The Hudson's Bay Company shared this interest by encouraging the livestock trade with St. Peter's. The limited import and export cattle trade that the settlers of Red River had carried on with Americans during the 1830's had gradually increased by 1843. This was in

3. Ibid., p. 150.

4. M. Marble, "To Red River and Beyond," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, vol. XXI (October, 1860), no. 123, p. 582.

line with the instructions which George Simpson, Governor-in-Chief of Rupert's Land, had received from the governor and committee of the Hudson's Bay Company in London in 1841.⁵ It was important that the colony at Red River should become established. Therefore, Simpson had been instructed to support the livestock trade.

But in the Red River Settlement both the growing of grain and stock-raising were secondary to the fur trade, the mainspring of the economy of the Settlement. And the commercial fur route of the Hudson's Bay Company did not run through American territory at this time; nor did it pass through Canada. After the union of the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies in 1821, the old canoe route via Lake Superior and the St. Lawrence had all but been abandoned. Now only local brigades and the express canoes of the Hudson's Bay Company moved along the former Nor'Wester route,⁶ a sign that the ties between Canada and the Northwest had not been completely broken. The York Factory route by way of Hudson's Bay had, in fact, become the only commercial outlet for the fur trade of the Hudson's Bay Company at Red River. The Bay route, however, with its one or two ships annually, could handle no more than the commerce of the Company and the goods imported by a few licensed traders.

5. J.S. Galbraith, The Hudson's Bay Company As An Imperial Factor, 1821-1869 (Toronto, 1957), p. 62.

6. W.L. Morton, Manitoba: A History (Toronto, 1957), p. 59.

Nor did the Hudson's Bay Company wish to share its fur trade monopoly with anyone besides these licensed traders. However, young men in Red River were often attracted to the fur trade because there was no ready market for a surplus in farm products of the river lots and in the plain provisions of the buffalo hunt, and because it was more profitable to trade furs with American traders than manning the York boats of the Company. This trade carried on without a licence was termed "illegal." One reason why the Company granted licences to certain individuals was to provide a check on the unlicensed free traders at Red River. Of these privileged individuals, there were three of particular note. In 1824 Andrew McDermot and Cuthbert Grant, the métis leader at the "Seven Oaks Massacre" in 1816, had each received a special licence to trade in furs. James Sinclair had obtained his licence to trade in furs when he went into partnership with McDermot in 1827. Although these licensed free traders collected many furs from the métis and Indians and brought them to the Hudson's Bay Company, there were always some furs going across the border to Pembina, or even as far as St. Peter's.

While the Hudson's Bay Company had encouraged the livestock trade with the United States, the Company did not tolerate a steady traffic in furs with Americans. Besides licensing free traders, the Company had used other means to slow down the "illegal" free trade. For one, through the efforts of John Halkett, executor of the Selkirk estate, most of the Pembina métis had been induced, in 1823, to settle on the Whitehorse Plain some eighteen miles from Fort Garry up the Assiniboine River.

Here, under the leadership of Cuthbert Grant, they were kept loyal to the Hudson's Bay Company. This was important because their former presence at Pembina, which was in American territory, had made them potential allies for the American fur traders. Secondly, in 1833 Governor Simpson had come to an agreement with the American Fur Company whereby this company agreed to withdraw all its frontier posts from Pembina to Lake Superior, and receive in exchange 300 pounds sterling annually from the Hudson's Bay Company.⁷ The American Fur Company had established a post at Pembina in 1829, and thus this place had become a rendezvous of the Red River free traders. But after 1833 the greatly slackened competition of the two fur companies resulted in discouraging the fur traffic across the border. Thirdly, when in 1834 the sixth Earl of Selkirk returned Assiniboia to the Hudson's Bay Company, the reorganized Council of Assiniboia immediately placed legal restrictions on the activities of the unlicensed free traders. In 1835 the Council placed a duty of 7½% on Red River imports and exports. However, by 1837 the duty had been reduced to 4%, at which it remained until 1870.

Some of the free traders who imported American goods paid this duty; others evaded it. Despite the restrictive duties, despite the check on the illegal free trade by the licensed free traders, particularly Cuthbert Grant who had been appointed Warden of the Plains in 1828, and despite the diminished competition from the American Fur Company, free

7. Galbraith, op. cit., p. 57.

traders continued to take their furs to the Americans. In fact, as long as the free trade did not become widespread, the Hudson's Bay Company could, and did, partly overlook this slight traffic of furs into the United States.

The annual buffalo hunt also took people from Red River into American territory. As the buffalo hunt moved southwest to the Souris plains and the Grand Coteau of the Missouri where the buffalo herds could be found grazing, the hunters occasionally came in contact with American traders. It was an opportunity, not to be missed, to trade furs and buffalo robes for American goods. Indeed, some of the métis remained in the United States and settled in such places as Prairie du Chien and St. Peter's. Thus the métis at Red River had occasion to travel to the American settlements to visit their friends and relatives.⁸ However, the journey was hardly ever undertaken by the métis without packing some furs and selling them to American traders.

Whereas the meeting of the buffalo hunters and the American traders was usually a friendly one, the encounter of the hunters with the Sioux rarely took place without some act of hostility. The Sioux were the ancient enemies of the Cree and Saulteaux Indians from whom the Red River half-breeds had descended. It was no wonder, then, that the half-breed hunters, who were frequently accompanied by the Saulteaux, had a number of skirmishes with the Sioux in whose territory the hunt took place. The encounter between the Saulteaux and the Sioux on the banks of the

8. D. Geneva Lent, West Of The Mountains (Seattle, 1963), p. 79.

Cheyenne River in 1840 was the beginning of four years of warfare. In 1844, however, Cuthbert Grant managed to negotiate an uneasy peace with the Sioux.⁹ Perhaps this was one of the reasons why trade between the Red River Settlement and St. Peter's, which was now known as St. Paul, began to grow in 1844, for the trails to St. Paul on the west side of the Red River passed through Sioux lands.

That there would be an increase in traffic to the south was, however, essentially marked by another event. This was the appearance of Norman Wolfred Kittson of the American Fur Company in Red River in December, 1843, and the fur trading post which he established at Pembina in 1844.

9. M.A. MacLeod and W.L. Morton, Cuthbert Grant of Grantown (Toronto, 1963), p. 129.

CHAPTER II

INCREASED TRAFFIC, 1844-1859

The arrival of Norman Kittson at Pembina in 1844 was only one of several factors which were operating to increase the trade of Red River with St. Paul. A second factor was that the Hudson's Bay Company began to restrict the trade of the licensed free traders, notably Andrew McDermot and James Sinclair. The differences which were thus caused between the Company and these free traders were not immediately to be resolved. Therefore, the year 1844 was to see the union of the interests of the free traders, both licensed and unlicensed, with those of Kittson at Pembina and the fur traders in St. Paul.

The interest of St. Paul in the fur country to the north had been revived when the American Fur Company had been reorganized by Pierre Chouteau Jr., and Company in 1843. Chouteau had assigned the fur trade of the Red River valley as far north as the forty-ninth parallel to Henry Hastings Sibley, who in turn had sent his friend Kittson to take charge of the frontier trade at Pembina. N.W. Kittson was no newcomer to the fur trade. Born at Chambly, Quebec, in 1814, Kittson had been engaged in fur trading activities since 1828. With Kittson at Pembina was another experienced fur trader, Joseph Rolette, Jr., son of the Joseph Rolette who had driven cattle to Red River in 1821. Kittson's post was ideally and centrally located to draw furs from the surrounding country. Furs were brought to Pembina from the Red River métis to the

north, from the Turtle Mountain area to the northwest, and from the rich fur preserve in the Roseau River district to the northeast. The American gold which Kittson offered for the furs induced the free traders of Red River to trade at Pembina. As the Pembina trade expanded, the six Red River carts, which had taken Kittson's first furs to St. Paul were soon multiplied in number.

There were also more cart brigades from Red River on the trails to St. Paul in 1844. This all but open trade with St. Paul brought a sudden change in the policy of the Hudson's Bay Company towards the free traders. In 1843 Chief Factor Finlayson refused to renew the freight contracts of McDermot and Sinclair to York Factory. Then, in 1844, Governor George Simpson cancelled all licences of free traders and imposed a strict supervision over all mails to and from Red River. The measure to control the mail was soon made ineffective because the free traders could send their letters by the Kittson express to St. Paul. Furthermore, the furs of the free traders were also taken south across the border instead of to the Hudson's Bay Company.

But the Company's deliberate failure to renew the freight contracts of McDermot and Sinclair was to affect a number of métis as well as these two traders. It meant that some twenty métis were now forced to discontinue their shipments of buffalo tallow to Britain, which had formerly been transported to York Factory in McDermot's boats.¹ Another cause of hardship for the métis in 1844 was the prairie fire that had

1. Lent, West of the Mountains, p. 171.

driven the buffalo beyond their habitual autumn feeding grounds on the Souris plains. Finding themselves short of pemmican and buffalo robes, the buffalo hunters now took to the fur trade with Americans. Thus natural events, the proximity of Kittson's post to Red River, and the attempt of the Company to check free trade had operated to encourage more of the Red River people to enter the fur trade in 1844 and 1845.

Furthermore, by the development of the free trade, and as a result of being cut off from the Bay route, the Red River free traders were committed to the exploitation of the St. Paul route. In 1844 a party of free traders, among whom was Peter Garrioch, opened the Crow Wing Trail.² The Crow Wing, or Wood, Trail ran north from St. Paul along the Mississippi to Crow Wing Village, and then in a northwesterly direction on the east side of the Red River through woods and over numerous streams to Pembina. With advantages of being less exposed to prairie fires and the Sioux, of having wood for camp sites and high gravelly ridges for faster travel, this trail was often preferred to the plain road west of the Red River.³ However, the plain road, which ran along the western slope of the Red River valley from Pembina to the Cheyenne River thus avoiding the marshy ground near the Red River, was also used by the cart brigades to travel to St. Paul during these years.

The fur trade with St. Paul was briefly slowed down from 1846 to 1848 when the free traders were provided with a market by the troops which had been sent to Red River in the fall of 1846. The Sixth Regiment of

2. P.A.M., G.H. Gunn, ed., "The Journal of Peter Garrioch," p. 43.

3. J.C. Schultz, "The Old Crow Wing Trail," Transactions and Proceedings of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, 1894, no.45, p.12.

of Foot, the Royal Warwickshires, commanded by Major John Ffolliot Crofton, had really been dispatched more in connection with the Oregon boundary dispute than because of the unrest that had resulted from the free trade movement. But the Oregon question had been settled in 1846. Therefore, in 1848, these highly respected troops, numbering over three hundred, were replaced by Major William B. Caldwell's fifty-six army pensioners from Chelsea, London. The pensioners commanded neither the fear nor the respect of the free traders of Red River. It was little wonder, then, that in 1849 at the Pierre Guillaume Sayer trial the pensioners helplessly stood by to witness the métis win their freedom to trade in furs.

The Hudson's Bay Company's tacit admission in 1849 that free trade had become a reality, despite the monopoly of the Company, marked a further development in the open trade with St. Paul. The development was partly indicated by Kittson's expanded trade, much of which was drawn from the free traders at Red River. In 1850 his trade required nearly two hundred carts and the furs amounted to the value of about twenty thousand dollars.⁴ But in the same year the Company raised its prices at Red River, and was able to get some of the furs from the Indians and half-breeds that would have otherwise gone to Kittson at Pembina. The trade that flowed across the border to Pembina was further checked when, in 1851, an American Customs Office was set up there, and Kittson was subjected to duties.⁵ And by 1854 the steady competition

4. Pritchett, The Red River Valley, 1811-1849, p. 255.

5. E.E. Rich, ed., London Correspondence Inward from Eden Colville, 1849-1852, with an "introduction" by W.L. Morton (London, 1956), p. XIX

from the Hudson's Bay Company caused Kittson to retire to St. Paul, at which time Joseph Rolette Jr. took over the Pembina post.

Despite the Company's victory over Kittson, the trade between the Red River Settlement and St. Paul continued to grow. In 1857 F. G. Johnson, Governor of Assiniboia, reported that Red River traders that year made purchases at St. Paul amounting to over £6,000.⁶ The carts which carried furs on the way down returned with such items as groceries, dry goods, stoves, guns, and farm implements. St. Paul was, indeed, significantly meeting the economic needs of the Red River Settlement.

At times the economic benefits derived from Americans seemed to produce a strain on the allegiance of the Red River people to the British Crown. But the métis were to maintain their ties with the Hudson's Bay Company, which stood for the British connection, more firmly than their unpredictable nature tended to indicate. In 1845 the meeting of the buffalo hunters with American cavalry south of the border had confronted the métis with this question. The Americans had told the hunters that they must either move to Pembina and become American citizens or else restrict their hunt to British territory. But the buffalo hunt thereafter was not confined to British territory; nor did the métis change their citizenship. However, when Father G.A. Belcourt's agitation for the constitutional rights of the half-breeds led to his recall from the mission at Baie St. Paul on the Assiniboine, over three

6. Archives of Hudson's Bay Company in P.A.C., (hereafter referred to as A.H.B.C.), A. 11/96, F. G. Johnson to W. G. Smith, June 29, 1857.

hundred métis followed him to his new mission at Pembina in 1848. The movement to Pembina was accelerated when it was reported that the American government was about to purchase the Pembina lands. But when, by the Pembina Treaty of 1851, the métis were not recognized as the rightful owners of these lands, many returned to the British side of the line.⁷ This treaty caused considerable disappointment and probably reminded the half-breeds of the benefits they enjoyed on British soil; it was not, however, to disrupt the friendly relations that the métis had established with St. Paul.

If the métis and the Red River free traders were grateful for the economic connection with St. Paul, the trade relationship was no less valued by the merchants of that frontier town. Indeed, the Red River fur trade had been an important reason for the early growth of St. Paul. But in later years the rapid development of St. Paul had resulted from circumstances within the United States. In 1850, a year after the territory of Minnesota had been created, there were only about 150 farms in the whole area, and the population of the territory was 6,077. But in the 1850's the northwestward advance of American settlement brought thousands of settlers to Minnesota. It was in these years that St. Paul experienced its first great boom. By 1858 when Minnesota became a state, St. Paul, its capital, had become the centre of commerce for the American Northwest. However, St. Paul business men were also eager to

7. Ross, The Red River Settlement: Its Rise Progress and Present State, pp. 411-412.

hold and expand their trade with the British Northwest, which was centred at the Red River Settlement.

That the trade between the Red River and St. Paul would probably continue to develop was partly indicated by the establishment of mail communications with the United States. By 1851 a mail route was operating between Pembina and St. Paul. In 1853 the settlers at Red River organized a monthly mail service from Fort Garry to Fort Ripley, Minnesota. Then, in 1857, the American government established a post office at Pembina, to which the mail was delivered once a month.⁸ Here it was picked up by a mail carrier from Red River. The Kittson express, by which the free traders had at first secretly sent letters, had been superseded by an official American mail route that was soon to serve the whole Settlement, even the Hudson's Bay Company.

The development of trade and communications between the Red River and the United States was emphasized by the failure of Canadians to establish effective communications with the Settlement. The failure, however, was not due to a want of interest in the Northwest on the part of Canadians. By 1856 Toronto business men had been actively planning to secure the trade of the Northwest for their city. Certain transportation developments had encouraged these plans. In 1855 the Northern Railway from Toronto to Collingwood on Georgian Bay had been completed. The next year the Northwestern Steamboat Company was founded to draw

8. J.J. Hargrave, Red River (Montreal, 1871), p. 100.

trade from the West via the Upper Lakes and Collingwood. Then, in 1857, Toronto merchants sent an expedition, led by William Kennedy, to find the most practicable route from Lake Superior to the Red River Settlement and to encourage commerce between Red River and Toronto. The same year the Canadian government appointed an exploring expedition. The legislature voted £5,000 for the opening of communications between Canada and Red River, and George Gladman, leader of the expedition, was instructed to explore the territory. Kennedy was successful in creating some interest in Red River for union with Canada. Gladman's party, from 1857 to 1858, through the work of its leading members, Henry Youle Hind and Samuel J. Dawson, made a significant contribution to the scientific exploration of the Northwest. It was estimated by Dawson that the cost of constructing a road between Lake Superior and the Red River Settlement would amount to £51,575.⁹ But the Cartier-Macdonald government, already struggling under financial difficulties, could not consider Dawson's proposal of a Canadian road to the Northwest.

The Toronto merchants, however, continued their efforts, and on August 16, 1858, the Northwest Transportation Navigation and Railway Company was incorporated. Under the leadership of William McDonnell Dawson, brother of S. J. Dawson, the Company planned to provide service with its steamer, the Rescue, between Collingwood and Fort William. The Company also secured a mail contract from the Canadian government and

9. P.A.M., Papers Relative to the Exploration of the Country Between Lake Superior and the Red River Settlement (London, 1859), p. 43.

and William Kennedy was put in charge of the mail service to Red River. However, in 1859 Dawson was unsuccessful in raising the necessary capital for the Northwest Transportation Navigation and Railway Company, which in that year had been reorganized under the Northwest Transit Company. The Northwest Transit Company experienced a further reverse when, in the spring of 1859, Simpson ordered the Hudson's Bay Company's officers on the Lake Superior route to give no further help to the Canadian mail carriers. Finally, the Canadian government cancelled the mail contracts of the Northwest Transit Company in the summer of 1859; the next year the mail service to Red River was entirely discontinued. Thus by 1859 the limited undertaking of the Northwest Transit Company had come to an end. The Canadian route to Red River had not worked out, and the track that S.J. Dawson's exploring expedition had cut between the Lake of the Woods and Red River was rapidly growing over from disuse.

The failure of the Canadian route seemed to underline what Captain John Palliser had said earlier. Palliser, who had headed the British exploring expedition to Red River by way of St. Paul in 1857, had reported that as far as communications were concerned the Red River Settlement was "more nearly connected with the United States" than to either England or Canada.¹⁰ He believed that the York Factory and Fort William routes

10. P.A.M., Papers Relative to the Exploration by Captain Palliser of that Portion of British North America Which Lies Between the Northern Branch of the River Saskatchewan and the Frontier of the United States; and Between the Red River and Rocky Mountains (London, 1860), p. 57.

were too difficult and expensive for settlers; therefore, the obvious route to the Red River Settlement from Canada was through American territory. At the same time he realized that if a practicable route with Canada was not opened, the fact that Red River was commercially tied to the United States could "yet cost England a province!"¹¹

However true this might be, the decade of the 1860's was to see a strengthening of these commercial bonds. The southern route of Red River, which had grown out of a limited livestock trade and a small traffic in furs, had been given its first great impetus in 1844 by the rapid growth of the free trade. Thereafter the St. Paul trails had increasingly been used to export the furs of free traders and to import goods for settlers. Now in 1859, ten years before the end of the Hudson's Bay Company rule in Rupert's Land, commerce on the St. Paul route was to receive its second burst of growth from the Company itself.

In this new venture of the Hudson's Bay Company, Governor George Simpson was to play the principal role. Simpson had carefully noted the recent railway development in the American West. And by 1859, by which time the railway from the East had reached the Mississippi, Simpson had already made extensive arrangements for the Hudson's Bay Company's overland transport via St. Paul.

11. Ibid.

PART II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ST. PAUL ROUTE, 1859-1866

CHAPTER III

GOVERNOR SIMPSON ESTABLISHES THE ST. PAUL ROUTE, 1859-1860

Governor George Simpson was to lead the way in the development of the St. Paul route in the years 1859 and 1860. This important step was taken at a time when St. Paul was showing new signs of interest in the Red River region. In the first place, the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce was interested in opening the Red River of the North to navigation. Secondly, in these years American manifest destiny turned more pointedly towards the British Northwest. Thus there were a number of indications that the relations between Minnesota and Red River might be further developed. It was little wonder, then, that in these circumstances the small Canadian party in Red River began to express concern for the future of the Red River Settlement. Immediately, however, the fur trade at Red River was to continue. And the main commercial route for the furs of both the free traders and the Hudson's Bay Company was to be by way of St. Paul.

From the outset it was evident that Simpson's knowledge of the fur trade and his organizational ability were not being spared in establishing the transport system via St. Paul. He had become thoroughly conversant with the subject by communicating with informed people in St. Paul, by going over the ground himself, and by taking a personal part in the re-organization. Although the governor and committee in London had some misgivings about some of the details of the new route, their consent to

proceed was always obtained following a reasonable explanation from Simpson.

The first step had been taken in 1857 when the Hudson's Bay Company had made arrangements with the Treasury Department of the United States whereby the Company's goods could be shipped in bond through the United States to Red River. Then, in 1858, on an experimental basis, a small portion of about forty tons of the supplies for Red River had been sent via New York to St. Paul.¹ From here the goods had been transported on the Company's carts to Fort Garry where they had arrived in good condition. The London committee had been encouraged by this initial success. However, in order that the shipments would be made on a larger scale and the route become a permanent one, Simpson was careful to give some important reasons for this change in routes. These reasons were based on first-hand observations.

In September, 1858, Simpson had accompanied Edward Ellice, Deputy-Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, to St. Paul. The main purpose of Simpson's journey was to collect information as to the means and cost of transport from St. Paul to Red River. On returning to his home at Lachine, eight miles above Montreal, Simpson, in a letter to Henry Hulse Berens, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, recommended the adoption of the St. Paul route.²

1. A.H.B.C., D. 5/49, H.H. Berens to G. Simpson, April 14, 1859.

2. Ibid., A. 12/9, Simpson to Berens, September 25, 1858.

Simpson's reasons for the adoption of the new route indicated that he had given the whole matter much thought. In the first place, the York Factory route was no longer able to meet the increasing demands of the Red River Settlement for foreign goods. This had arisen partly out of the scarcity of labour available for manning the York boats. The servants of the Company found the work laborious, and the half-breed tripmen could not be persuaded to undertake it without high wages. The freight charges from York to Red River had, in recent years, increased from twelve to twenty-eight shillings sterling per one hundred pounds of freight. Moreover, if the Company was to be entirely dependent upon the York route, the lack of goods would encourage American traders to supply the Settlement by way of Pembina. A lack of goods combined with a shortage of provisions, especially in a year when there was a failure in the buffalo hunt or the crops, would also create serious problems for the Company's transport system to its posts in Rupert's Land. Finally, the St. Paul route would save the Company interest on the goods because the shipment would be enroute only about three months. By the York Factory route two years had elapsed between the date of shipment from England to the time the goods came into use at Red River. This had resulted from the Company's policy to keep a complete supply of goods in reserve at York to provide against the possible loss of the ships.

However, Simpson did not recommend that the York Factory route should be entirely discontinued. Rather he thought that about half of the outfits could be brought in via St. Paul to supply the Company's southern territory, and the other half through the Bay route for the northern

districts. The Company now proposed to send from 120 to 150 tons of goods via St. Paul. This would further enable it to judge the comparative merits of the two routes.

Simpson's plans for the transport of these goods were soon underway. By the end of March, 1859, he had completed arrangements with Hugh Allan of the Canadian Mail Steamers and George Keith, general manager of the Grand Trunk Railway Company, for the conveyance of the Company's goods. The Grand Trunk had agreed to grant the Hudson's Bay Company through bills of lading for the whole distance from Liverpool to St. Paul at the rate of twenty-eight dollars per ton.³ This served to simplify the transport and to diminish the cost. At Liverpool the goods were to be shipped on board the Canadian line of steamers to Montreal. From Montreal the Grand Trunk became responsible for the shipments via Detroit and Milwaukee to St. Paul. On the recommendations of Simpson, the Hudson's Bay Company had temporarily appointed J.C. Burbank and H.C. Burbank, proprietors of the Northwestern Express Company, as its agents in St. Paul.

It was in St. Paul where Simpson arrived in May, 1859, that further arrangements were made for the overland transport to the Red River Settlement. Simpson instructed J.C. Burbank, who conducted the business of the Burbank Brothers with the Hudson's Bay Company, to purchase fifty oxen. The carts for these oxen were to be brought along by the train of one-hundred ox-carts from Red River. Early in June, when pasturage was

3. Ibid., A. 12/10, G. Keith to Simpson, March 19, 1859.

available, was to be the time of departure of the Red River cart train for St. Paul. In this way Simpson proceeded to look after the necessary details of the new route. In order to save time and expense he thought that batteaux, craft quickly and roughly constructed, could be used to transport some of the goods from the mouth of the Cheyenne River down the Red River to Fort Garry.⁴ The work of the cart brigades would thus be eased.

However, the navigation of the Red River of the North was already actively being planned by the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce. In the spring of 1859 two steamboat projects were on foot, and competing for the bonus of one thousand dollars offered by the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce for the first steamboat successfully to navigate the Red River of the North. The aim of these projects was, however, not limited to the navigation of the Red River, but to proceed through Lake Winnipeg and up the Saskatchewan.⁵ Although Simpson was doubtful of their success, he hoped that these and other attempts to open a highway into the Company's territory would not continue. The ultimate outcome of the steamboat projects underlined the doubts and justified the hopes of Simpson. One, the Anson Northup, while under the owner by the same name, made one successful trip to Fort Garry and back in June, 1859. The second, the Freighter, was to fail completely. In the summer of 1859, the Hudson's Bay Company and J.C. Burbank jointly purchased the Anson Northup, which then was named the Pioneer; some time later the Freighter was also jointly purchased and its

4. Ibid., A. 12/10, Simpson to T. Fraser, May 16, 1859.

5. Ibid.

machinery was used in the new steamboat, the International. But before Simpson had looked to the acquisition of a steamboat, he had attended to the cart transport.

On May 18, 1859, Simpson left St. Paul and travelled to the Red River Settlement by the Crow Wing Trail. He had taken particular note of the country on the east side of the Red River. The land was well watered and had a good timber stand and thus offered facilities for travel. At Red River Simpson noted that the stores of the Company were well stocked with the necessary assortment of goods. Despite the fact that the overland transport had scarcely been tested, a considerable change had already taken place. For the past two or three years the Red River free traders and the Americans on the frontier had been able to extend their trade because of the shortage of supplies in the sales shops of the Company. But now Simpson was impressed by the Company's improved position, and how this was providing a check on the free traders and the Americans. One American experiencing financial difficulties was N. W. Kittson, whose store was in St. Boniface.⁶ Kittson, whom Simpson considered "the most extensive and respectable of the American traders doing business at Red River;" was thinking of withdrawing from the fur trade.⁷ Although Kittson was hard pressed, and with him some other free traders, the St. Paul route was really working in favour of the free trade as well as for the Company. While the Hudson's Bay Company

6. While N.W. Kittson had been at Pembina, he had married a daughter of M. Narcisse Marion, a French Canadian living in St. Boniface. Subsequent to Kittson's departure from Pembina to St. Paul in 1854, he had established a business in St. Boniface.

See J.W. Bond, Minnesota and its Resources (New York, 1853), p. 287.

7. A.H.B.C., A. 12/10, Simpson to Gov. and Comm., June 21, 1859.

was checking the free trade by its superior and larger stock of goods and by its ability to outbid its opponents, it was also helping to meet the economic needs of the Settlement by establishing better communications with St. Paul. How much Simpson, in this new venture, actually thought in terms of the Settlement is difficult to determine. But if the St. Paul route was gain to the Company, it had become, in the absence of any other practicable route, a necessity to the people of Red River.

Meanwhile, Simpson had entrusted the superintendence of the overland transport to the experienced James McKay, brother-in-law of William Mactavish who was now the Governor of Assinibioa. McKay was to be in charge of a clerk, three conductors of men, and fifty drivers, each driver looking after three carts. It was planned that the cart brigade, on leaving the Settlement, would take the outer, or plain, road on the west side of the Red River. This trail crossed the Red River some distance above the mouth of the Cheyenne and ran in a southeasterly course to St. Cloud on the Mississippi, from where it was another seventy-five miles to St. Paul. On the return trip from St. Paul the carts would be divided into detachments of fifty, each under the supervision of a conductor. In order to avoid confusion at the crossing of streams, of which there were fifteen or sixteen between St. Paul and Pembina,⁸ the detachments of carts should travel at a distance of one day's march apart.

With the plans for overland transport underway, and after a trip to

8. Bond, op. cit., p. 327.

Norway House, Simpson returned to St. Paul by the plain road, This trail, he thought, would become the main route between the Red River Settlement and St. Paul. It was on his return to St. Paul that Simpson began two further developments to facilitate transportation along the St. Paul route. One was the building of a cattle station and trading post at the mouth of the Buffalo River, an eastern tributary which flowed into the Red four miles below the Cheyenne. This post, soon to be named Georgetown in honour of George Simpson, was also to become the head of navigation on the Red River. The second development, therefore, was that a steamboat was to aid in transporting the Company's goods to the Red River Settlement.

Georgetown, then, was to become a half-way point between Fort Garry and St. Paul. Carts would transport the Company's goods from St. Paul to Georgetown; from here the carts and the steamboat would carry them to Red River. Furthermore, at Georgetown the goods could be stored over winter. In spring the wet trails, swollen streams, and little pasturage made cart travel very difficult. Therefore, if the supplies were kept in storage at Georgetown, the first of these could be shipped to Red River by steamboat on the opening of navigation. Another advantage of the Georgetown post was its location. Located on the east side of the Red River, it had natural advantages of wood for building and pasture for the cattle. Moreover, Georgetown was beyond the immediate reach of the Sioux Indians whose lands were on the west side of the Red.

In order to avail the proposed establishment at Georgetown of

pasture and hay lands, as well as timber, Simpson planned to buy about one thousand acres of land. This land could be obtained for the Company by means of a special kind of land warrant known as "half-breed scrip" for between two and three dollars per acre.⁹ However, the title to these American lands was to be registered, in the first place, in J. C. Burbank's name. Burbank was then free to sell the land to any person, whether citizen or alien. Because there were complications in registering the deed in the Company's name, Simpson was prepared to take out the title for this land in his own name.¹⁰ Thus Simpson was finding Burbank a great help in establishing the new route.

Burbank was also to enter significantly into the Hudson's Bay Company's steamboat operations on the Red River for which Simpson had been authorized to make a moderate outlay. Simpson's opportunity came when Anson Northup, after making one trip to Fort Garry, found that he had exhausted all his funds in building his vessel and was now unable to run it for want of business. It was obvious that without the freight of the Company the Anson Northup could not be operated profitably. Because Simpson refused to pay the rate of \$1.50 per 100 lbs. which Northup was asking, the steamboat did not have enough freight to make up a cargo.

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9. A.H.B.C., A. 12/10, Simpson to Gov. and Comm., July 18, 1859.
10. By the laws of the United States a corporation was not permitted to hold real estate unless the names of all the stockholders were specified in the deed. This, Simpson thought, would be very "inconvenient" for the Hudson's Bay Company. Hence the lands of the Company at Georgetown were registered in his name.

At this point negotiations were opened with Northup. The result was that Simpson, for the Hudson's Bay Company, and Burbank jointly purchased the Anson Northup for eight thousand dollars.¹¹ For the time being Simpson had taken the Company's share in the steamboat on his own account because the ownership of the Anson Northup in the Company's name would have involved the same difficulties as the lands at Georgetown. Moreover, since private parties were to be charged twice the freight rate that the Hudson's Bay Company was to pay, the Company would be less open to criticism if its part-ownership of the vessel remained unknown. According to the Simpson-Burbank agreement, the vessel would carry the Company's freight at the rate of \$.75 per 100 lbs. for a period of five years.¹² However, this agreement, which did not receive the immediate approval of the governor and committee in London, was to be re-negotiated for a more comprehensive one before the year 1859 had ended.

Meantime, Burbank had outfitted the Anson Northup, now called the Pioneer, with a crew, furniture, and provisions from St. Paul.¹³ But the Pioneer was to be of little service in 1859. At the beginning of

11. A.H.B.C., A. 12/10, Simpson to Gov. and Comm., July 18, 1859.

12. Ibid.

13. A.H.B.C., A. 12/10, Simpson to Fraser, October 14, 1859.

August, the steamboat loaded with the Company's goods and on its way to Red River became grounded on a sandbank forty miles below the Cheyenne at the mouth of the Goose River, a western tributary of the Red. The low state of the water in the river had caused the vessel to become stranded on the Goose Rapids; this event was to be repeated in the coming years. However, after most of the cargo of the Pioneer had been unloaded onto the carts sent from Georgetown by James McKay, the lightened steamboat was able to get to the Red River. The Pioneer was then laid up for the winter at Lower Fort Garry, where it was to undergo repairs.

If the steamboat experiment in 1859 was a comparative failure, then the cart transport, under the able management of McKay, was a success. On September 26 the last train of Red River carts, loaded with English goods, left Georgetown for Red River.¹⁴ By October 10 all the supplies from England and Lachine had reached the Settlement. The goods purchased by the Hudson's Bay Company at St. Paul, with the exception of some sugar that was being held over in St. Cloud, had also arrived before winter. In all a total shipment of about 137,620 lbs. had been transported by the St. Paul route.¹⁵ Similarly, the work at the Georgetown post was proceeding in good order. Burbank had been taking the necessary steps to secure the land for the Hudson's Bay Company. Under the direction of McKay, sufficient hay had been made for some sixty oxen that were to remain at Georgetown during the winter;

14. Ibid., A. 12/10, Simpson to Fraser, October 14, 1859.

15. Ibid., D. 5/50, William Mactavish to Simpson, December 8, 1859.

timber had been prepared for the erection of houses and cattle sheds. When the whole undertaking of the St. Paul route was considered, much had been achieved. None of the supplies which had been carried through the more than five hundred miles of uninhabited territory from St. Paul to Red River had been lost. Of course, as was to be expected, the initial expenses for the new route were quite heavy; it was hoped, though, that these would become less when arrangements for the transport system had been completed.

One of the uncompleted items, and one which was to be revised, was the Simpson-Burbank steamboat agreement. From the past year's experience Simpson had learned that, if the Hudson's Bay Company was to take advantage of steam navigation on the Red River, the transport would have to be performed in the months of May, June, and July when the water was high. To achieve this, Simpson intended to draw more upon the offered resources of Burbank.

Accordingly, on November 3, 1859, while Burbank was at Lachine, Simpson, on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company, and Burbank agreed to a new contract.¹⁶ No change had been made regarding the former terms of the joint ownership of the Pioneer. In essence the period of time, too, remained unaltered. Since only four years (in terms of transport) of the former five-year agreement were left, the new contract was made for a four-year period to be in effect during the years 1860, 1861, 1862,

16. Ibid., A. 12/10, Simpson to Fraser, November 11, 1859.

and 1863. The new contract had four additional terms, two to be carried out by Burbank and two by the Company. First, Burbank agreed to transport 250 tons of the Company's goods each year at the rate of \$4.00 per 100 lbs., the sum to include all handling and storing charges from the time Burbank received the goods in St. Paul to the time they were delivered at Fort Garry. Second, Burbank would carry buffalo robes at \$2.00 per 100 lbs. from Fort Garry to St. Paul. Third, the Hudson's Bay Company would make J. C. Burbank an advance of five thousand dollars in connection with the first year's transport. Lastly, the Company agreed to provide Burbank with about 100 tons of goods from England each year in autumn. These goods would then be taken by Burbank to Georgetown and put into storage to be ready for transport in spring.

It was clear that the terms of the new contract were designed to make the transport by the St. Paul route as efficient as possible. Moreover, Burbank had increased his responsibility by undertaking the whole transport from St. Paul to Red River; it followed that his expenses would increase proportionally. Burbank estimated that the purchasing of stock and waggons, the bridging of streams, and the improving of roads would cost him \$19,750 for the next season.¹⁷ Had the Hudson's Bay Company undertaken the whole transport, Simpson reasoned, the expenses thus incurred by it would not have been diminished as they would be if the new contract went into force.

However, it appears that the governor and committee in London had,

17. Ibid.

from the first, been disposed not to favour the partnership with Burbank. In September, 1859, the London committee had written Simpson that the St. Paul route would likely be an aid to the transportation of the Company's goods. But it would be more desirable for the Company to have its own agent in St. Paul. Furthermore, the joint interest of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Pioneer with Burbank did not meet with the full approval of the London committee. The committee felt that, if the Pioneer would be a success, other enterprising Americans would put more steamboats on the Red and make the St. Paul route a highway into Rupert's Land. This in turn, it was feared, would "soon lead to the infusion of so much Yankee blood into the Settlement as to occasion trouble hereafter."¹⁸ Simpson was also reminded that Burbank, as the Company's agent, would use this position to further his own interests, and at the same time gain an insight into the business of the Company. For these reasons the governor and committee in London were hesitant about the Company's partnership with Burbank. However, by November, 1859, Simpson had received permission to complete the Company's joint purchase of the Pioneer with Burbank. The London committee still urged, though, that one of the men of the Hudson's Bay Company should be employed as the agent in St. Paul.

Despite the unwillingness of the London committee in the matter,

18. A.H.B.C., D. 5/50, W. G. Smith to Simpson, September 2, 1859.

Simpson had gone ahead and signed a contract with Burbank. It was done in the hope that in the end the committee would give its consent. But when the governor and committee could not be persuaded, Simpson, after informing Burbank, reported back to London that the committee was free to cancel the contract.¹⁹

However, Simpson was not to give in without a struggle. In the same letter he explained once more why he had entered into the contract with Burbank. In the first place, the arrangement with Burbank had not been gone into hastily. It had been the result of careful consideration on the part of Simpson to secure a greater degree of efficiency and economy in the Company's transport system. One way to do this was to employ an American contractor in St. Paul to do the work in United States territory. According to Simpson, his views and those of William Mactavish were identical on this point. Burbank would be able to employ experienced help, especially in St. Paul and in the steamboat operations. The officers of the Company and the Red River half-breeds, on the other hand, were experienced in the Indian trade but would have to learn the new transport system. At the same time Simpson had only praise for the services rendered by Mactavish and McKay. Furthermore, Burbank would be more influential than the Hudson's Bay Company in securing military protection from the Sioux. As far as Burbank was concerned personally, Simpson had "confidence in his integrity and straight forward character."²⁰ Simpson believed that Burbank, of whom

19. Ibid., A. 12/10, Simpson to Fraser, December 9, 1859.

20. Ibid.

he had recently seen a good deal, had no ulterior motives in seeking the freight contract. As a man of capital, Burbank carried on a lucrative business in connection with the Northwestern Express Company; it was doubtful that he would exchange this for the fur trade. Simpson made this long defence of the freight contract because he had been largely instrumental in persuading the London committee to adopt the St. Paul route; hence his concern that the experiment should meet with success.

Whether Simpson or the London committee would be proved right in the matter of the freight contract, only time could tell. None the less, Simpson's letter had convinced the governor and committee, and in December, 1859, they confirmed the contract which Simpson had made with Burbank.²¹ Simpson immediately notified J. C. Burbank and William Mactavish of the completed transaction. However, Simpson neglected to send Mactavish a copy of the contract. This omission was not to be forgotten by Mactavish, and in a few years it was to be drawn into the difficulties which then arose in connection with the St. Paul transport.

But at the moment plans were being made to extend the transport system by way of St. Paul. Simpson had already instructed Burbank to purchase a second steamboat, the Freighter, which was now grounded at the head of the Minnesota River. It was planned that the second steamboat would be run in conjunction with the Pioneer. Although two steamboats were not to navigate the Red simultaneously in these years, steam navigation between Minnesota and the Red River Settlement was to

21. A.H.B.C., A. 12/10, Simpson to Fraser, December 23, 1859.

continue. The steamboat was also an indication of the interest of St. Paul in Red River, and this interest was now being furthered by J. C. Burbank.

However, there were other people in St. Paul who were interested in the Red River Settlement in these years. Certainly the St. Paul merchants, who were buying furs from the Red River free traders and selling them supplies, belonged to this group.²² There were also a few scattered Red River métis who had settled in St. Paul. These continued to visit back and forth with their relatives and friends in Red River. Of the people connected with the government of Minnesota, it was probably James Wickes Taylor, resident of St. Paul since 1856, who showed the greatest interest in the Red River Settlement and the British Northwest.

Taylor had assiduously collected information on the Northwest while he was state librarian of Ohio, previous to his coming to St. Paul. He soon became a recognized authority on the Northwest, and in 1857, when he published a number of articles on that subject, he received the nickname of "Saskatchewan Taylor."²³ Taylor was also to become interested in the railways that were planning to project their lines to the Northwest. In 1857 Congress had made a liberal grant of lands to the territory of Minnesota for the construction of railways. The next year the state of Minnesota transferred part of this grant to

22. St. Paul Weekly Pioneer and Democrat, March 2, 1860.

23. B. L. Heilbron, "Manifest Destiny in Minnesota's Republican Campaign of 1860," Minnesota History, XXXVII (June, 1960), p. 54.

the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad Company, and Taylor became the Company's secretary.²⁴ Although this railway had completed only ten miles of track between St. Paul and St. Anthony by 1862, it was not because Taylor had failed to give the Company publicity. As an eager publicist for all matters related to the opening of the Northwest, Taylor, in 1859, was appointed special agent of the St. Paul Treasury Department. The same year Henry H. Sibley, Governor of Minnesota, requested Taylor to obtain reliable information on his visit to the Red River Settlement concerning an overland route from Pembina through the Saskatchewan valley to the mouth of the Fraser River.

On Taylor's visit to Red River in 1859, he was impressed with the friendliness of the people in the Settlement towards Minnesota. He reported that the Red River people greatly appreciated the advantages of communication which they had through the state of Minnesota.²⁵ Moreover, Taylor said, they hoped that trade would further be facilitated between Red River and St. Paul. In this regard the navigation of the Red River by a steamboat in 1859 was recognized as being of particular importance by the people of the Settlement. Taylor had also found that informed people were willing to communicate on the general conditions of the country. One of these informants was William Mactavish. Later, through correspondence with Donald Gunn of Red River,

24. L. B. Irwin, Pacific Railways and Nationalism in the Canadian-American Northwest, 1845-1873 (Philadelphia, 1939), p. 129.

25. M.H.S., J. W. Taylor, Legislature of Minnesota, Northwest British America, and its Relations to the State of Minnesota, 1860, p. 1.

Taylor was to learn more of the history and the conditions of soil and climate of the Northwest.²⁶

Taylor used the information he had obtained in Red River in 1859 and material from some of the latest publications on the Northwest, such as Lorin Blodget's Climatology of the United States, to publicize the development of the Northwest. The publicity campaign was carried on by writing and through lectures. In November, 1859, Taylor gave a public lecture at St. Cloud, Minnesota, on the future of Minnesota as it was related to the opening of communications with the Northwest.²⁷ He pointed out that it was now believed that agriculture would prosper south of the isothermal line which ran through the mouth of the Red River of the North. And as settlement would increase in the British Northwest, the natural route of travel to that region would be through Minnesota. Thus Taylor interested himself in furthering the economic relations between Red River and Minnesota.

But Taylor was also interested in the political destiny of the Red River Settlement. He carefully noted down part of the address given by Senator William H. Seward in St. Paul on September 18, 1860.²⁸ Seward

26. P.A.M., Donald Gunn Papers, D. Gunn to J. W. Taylor, March 26, 1860.

27. St. Paul Daily Pioneer and Democrat, November 13, 1859.

28. M.H.S., James Wickes Taylor Papers, Taylor's notes of this speech, September 18, 1860.

had found time to interrupt his Republican campaign speech with a few, sweeping statements on American manifest destiny. Rupert's Land, he thought, would one day be a part of the American union. Although Taylor was to promote the idea of the annexation of the Northwest more ardently as time went on, he also believed that it would happen naturally. The economic bonds of Red River with St. Paul, he felt, would gradually grow into political ties. Therefore, it was important to build up and facilitate the movement of commerce between Red River and Minnesota.

That the commercial intercourse between Red River and Minnesota was steadily growing was particularly noticed by the Canadian party at Red River. In the years 1859 and 1860, Red River was to see the arrival of only a few Canadian immigrants. But these aggressive people were soon to make their presence known. Henry McKenney, who came from Canada West in 1859, opened the Royal Hotel in Red River. He was followed in 1860 by his half-brother, John Christian Schultz, from Amherstburg. By 1862 McKenney and Schultz had built a store at the junction of the Assiniboine and Red River trails, and the place soon became the headquarters of the Canadian party. In 1859 two Toronto newspapermen, William Buckingham and William Coldwell, had come to the Settlement to establish the Nor'Wester, the first newspaper of the Red River. Taking the St. Paul route, they had purchased the paper and much of the plant in St. Paul. The materials were then transported by Red River cart over the Crow Wing Trail to Red River.²⁹ The main theme of

29. J. W. Dafoe, "Early Winnipeg Newspapers," Papers of the Manitoba Historical Society, series III, no. 3, 1946-1947, p. 14.

the Nor'Wester was annexation of the Northwest to Canada; for this reason it kept up a steady agitation against the Hudson's Bay Company rule, which was done in the hope that this rule would soon end. However, a decade was to go by before these events came to pass.

Meantime, the Canadian party paid close attention to the developments related to the St. Paul route. The Nor'Wester, which had become the voice of the Canadian party, had a number of observations to make. The inland position of Red River had made the matter of communications one of great importance. Three main approaches, the Hudson's Bay, the St. Paul, and the Lake Superior routes, gave access to the Red River Settlement.³⁰ The short navigation season on the Bay, the hazardous trip from York Factory to Red River, and the difficulty of securing tripmen for the York boats had made the Hudson's Bay route impracticable as a means of handling all the traffic to and from the Settlement. The St. Paul route had recently become the most used approach. Although the present communications with Minnesota were greatly valued, the Settlement would prefer to have its permanent route through British territory. Therefore, based on S. J. Dawson's confident report of the possibility of a practicable road via Fort William, and based on the fact that it lay in British territory, the Lake Superior route was thought to be the most desirable by the Nor'Wester. Despite this conclusion, the Nor'Wester readily admitted the superiority of the St. Paul route as far as Red River trade was concerned. And the recent

30. Nor'Wester, May 14, 1860.

success of this channel of communications was largely credited to J. C. Burbank.³¹

It is true that Burbank had worked industriously to improve communications between St. Paul and Red River. Nor was anyone more convinced of this than Governor Simpson.³² However, Simpson had been careful to keep the extent of the Company's involvement in the new developments from the public. Otherwise the Hudson's Bay Company, too, would have had to share more fully the comments, whether favourable or critical, that were to be made about the extended transportation facilities.

None the less, Burbank had done much to prepare for the spring transport of 1860. He had sent a machinist to overhaul the machinery of the Pioneer, which had been lying in Netley Creek below the Lower Fort during the winter.³³ Then Burbank had arranged for the construction of one hundred waggons, and by June these vehicles, divided into four brigades of twenty-five in each, were carrying freight from St. Paul to Georgetown.³⁴ All the streams between these two places had been bridged. However, the people in Red River, as well as the Hudson's Bay Company, were to benefit from Burbank's efforts. The Minnesota Stage

31. Ibid., June 14, 1860.

32. A. H. B. C., A. 12/10, Simpson to Fraser, June 1, 1860.

33. Nor'Wester, March 28, 1860. The steamboat was still often referred to by its former name, Anson Northup.

34. Ibid., June 14, 1860.

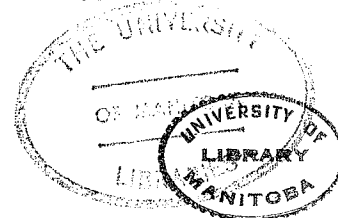
Company, owned by Burbank, would run four-horse stage coaches for passengers and mails from St. Paul to meet the Pioneer at Georgetown.³⁵ Furthermore, Burbank had nearly completed arrangements with the Grand Trunk Railway Company whereby Red River merchants could order goods directly from Canada or England. The merchants would then be able to contract with Burbank for the transportation of these goods in bond the entire distance to Fort Garry.³⁶ The import and export trade that the Red River merchants carried on with St. Paul was also to be accommodated by Burbank. The rates were: \$5.00 per 100 lbs. from Fort Garry to St. Paul, and \$6.00 per 100 lbs. from St. Paul to Fort Garry.³⁷

From Burbank's plans, which had received the approval of Simpson, it was clearly to be seen that the steamboat was also to be employed for the benefit of the public, the free traders included. This would probably mean that Red River trade with St. Paul would increase. However, at the same time the St. Paul route was beginning to stand for more than a connection with Minnesota. The route was actually a means whereby Red River importers could more easily get their goods from England or Canada. It is true that the Hudson's Bay Company had again made it possible for free traders to import goods from England by the Company's ship, but only on a limited basis. Now it appeared that the commercial

35. Ibid., March 28, 1860.

36. Ibid.

37. A.H.B.C., A. 12/10, Simpson to Fraser, June 29, 1860; Nor'Wester, June 14, 1860.



bonds of Red River with England and Canada were to be strengthened, if but a little. Travel to and from these places was also to increase. Red River, in the 1860's, was really not to be cut off from England and Canada as much as the St. Paul route sometimes tended to indicate. Another fact regarding the steamboat, but unknown to most merchants in Red River, was that Burbank's freight rates for them were considerably higher than for the Hudson's Bay Company. Perhaps it was the high rates in themselves, though, that encouraged the cart brigades of private traders to continue freighting between Red River and St. Paul. In June, 1860, a caravan of over three hundred carts left for St. Paul.

However, most of the Company's goods and a number of the purchases by Red River merchants in St. Paul were carried to Red River on the Pioneer. Although the Pioneer was for some time stranded at the Goose Rapids on her trip from Netley Creek to Georgetown, Burbank's captain and crew from St. Paul were soon able to free the steamboat. On June 14, 1860, the Pioneer, accompanied by J. C. Burbank, arrived at Red River with a load of freight and some twenty-five passengers. The steamboat flew two flags, the Stars and Stripes at the fore, and the Union Jack at the stern.³⁸ After this first trip of the season, the boat continued to make the return trip at fairly regular intervals. On July 17 the Pioneer arrived at Red River with a cargo of thirty tons. Besides the freight of the Hudson's Bay Company,

38. A.H.B.C., D 5/51, J. C. Burbank to Simpson, March 5, 1860.

this cargo contained goods for about twenty-three private importers.³⁹ By the end of July, nearly five thousand dollars worth of agricultural implements, among which were twenty reapers and thirteen fanning mills, had been brought in from St. Paul. The orders of groceries by the Hudson's Bay Company and by the Red River merchants amounted to about six thousand dollars.⁴⁰ Therefore, settlers and merchants alike were able to make necessary purchases in St. Paul and have the goods transported to Red River.

The governor and committee in London, however, were expressing some concern about the large amount of freight that the Pioneer was carrying for private traders. To this Simpson answered that it had been understood, when the steamboat was jointly purchased by Burbank and the Company, that goods for private parties would also be freighted. Simpson also believed that any business that Burbank did for the settlers would discourage the trade of N. W. Kittson and other American traders on the frontier. Moreover, if Burbank was only to do the business of the Company, it was doubtful whether he would continue the contract.⁴¹ Furthermore, Simpson said, private parties would still carry their goods over the St. Paul route even if they were denied the

39. Nor'Wester, July 28, 1860.

40. Ibid.

41. A.H.B.C., A. 12/10, Simpson to Fraser, August 3, 1860.

Company's transportation facilities. Simpson again reassured the London committee that Burbank had no interest in the fur trade of the interior, and limited himself strictly to the transport business.

While the London committee had always been a little doubtful of the advantage of having Burbank in charge of the Company's transport business at St. Paul, it was soon to rely on him almost exclusively. Near the end of September, 1860, the Pioneer arrived at Red River with her colours at half-mast in observance of the death of George Simpson.⁴² Governor Simpson had passed away at his home in Lachine on September 7, 1860. The event had come at a time when Simpson was satisfied that the St. Paul transport could be considered a success.

The transport route by way of St. Paul, which Simpson had persuaded the Hudson's Bay Company to adopt, was now largely established. This had been accomplished under the direction of Simpson with the help of J.C. Burbank. The years 1859 and 1860 had witnessed the growing together of the commercial interests of the free traders and those of the Company in the St. Paul route. This alliance, which had arisen out of common needs, was to operate in the coming years to sustain Red River economically. It was also to diminish the agitation against the Hudson's Bay Company rule. However, the commercial ties between Red River and St. Paul had also been drawn tighter. Transportation to St. Paul had improved, and the immediate future of this transport system was largely to depend upon J. C. Burbank.

42. Nor'Wester, September 28, 1860.

CHAPTER IV

THE BURBANK LINE, 1860-1862

From the fall of 1860 to the spring of 1862, the Hudson's Bay Company transport via St. Paul was left almost entirely in the hands of J. C. Burbank. Perhaps the London committee was influenced not to interfere in the running of the transport system by Simpson's unshakable faith in the honesty of Burbank. Possibly little direction was given to Burbank because in this time the transport of the Company's goods was carried on with reasonable efficiency. Burbank, however, did not only look after the freight of the Company. He also continued to serve the needs of the Red River traders and settlers. Moreover, through his efforts the postal communications of the Settlement were improved. With all this traffic between Red River and St. Paul, it was no wonder that some Americans found their way to the Settlement. There is no evidence, though, that these traders were concerned with anything beyond their private trading interests. And in the conducting of their trade, they made use, though not to the exclusion of their own carts, of the transportation facilities offered by Burbank.

Burbank had been successful in transporting all the goods consigned to him for the 1860 season to Red River before winter. The Pioneer, under its captain, C. P. V. Lull, brother-in-law of J. C. Burbank, had arrived with its last cargo on September 26.¹ On the return of the

1. A.H.B.C., A. 12/42, Mactavish to Fraser, October 15, 1860.

steamboat to Georgetown, the low state of the water had made another trip impossible. Therefore, the last load of goods was sent by a barge. Although the barge only reached the Settlement on November 2, just when the ice was beginning to form on the river, the goods had all arrived safely.

But already in September Burbank had sent a card announcing his plans for the coming season to the people in the Red River Settlement. "Having fully and permanently established our line between St. Paul and Fort Garry," the card read,² the Burbank Brothers were now making extensive preparations for the transportation of passengers, mails, and goods in 1861.

An overland mail service was the first of Burbank's arrangements. He had received the contract for a fortnightly mail service from St. Paul to Pembina.³ The mail carrier from Georgetown to Pembina was to be G. W. Northup. Horses would be used to carry the mail on this part of the route until the snow came; thereafter it was to be carried by dog teams. By October the overland mail service was in operation. Six weeks had formerly been the average time for communications between Red River and England. By the new route a London newspaper had reached the Settlement in thirty-two days; a letter to England had taken only twenty

2. Ibid., A. 12/42, J. C. and H. C. Burbank and Co. to our friends of the Red River Settlement, September, 1860.

3. Nor'Wester, October 15, 1860.

eight days; Thus by the end of 1860, Minnesota had taken another step to improve the communications system of Red River.

At the beginning of the 1861 transport season, Burbank was working on two new developments. The first had to do with N. W. Kittson. Burbank was hoping to be able to enter into partnership with Kittson. Should this take place, all the steamboat business would then be done at Kittson's establishment on the east bank of the Red River, opposite the mouth of the Assiniboine. However, when Burbank wanted to know the opinion of William Mactavish on this matter, the latter was not in favour.⁴ Mactavish could not see any necessity or advantage in making a change in the steamboat business. Hitherto, since the beginning of steam navigation on the Red, the deliveries had been made at the steamboat landing at Upper Fort Garry. In October, 1860, the Nor'Wester had announced that the Hudson's Bay Company was planning to build a receiving warehouse at this landing for Burbank.⁵ Here a clerk was to be employed during the summer to take orders, deliver goods, and collect debts. It is not certain, though, whether these plans had materialized. At any rate, Burbank and Kittson did not enter into a partnership.⁶ Neither is it known whether Kittson was interested in the carrying trade

4. A.H.B.C., A. 12/42, Mactavish to Fraser, March 7, 1861.

5. Nor'Wester, October 15, 1860.

6. A.H.B.C., A. 12/42, Mactavish to Fraser, May 1, 1861.

at this time. However, the Hudson's Bay Company was later to make this opposition trader into a friend and make good use of him in the transport business.

Burbank's second project, about which he was more serious, was to be carried out. In order to facilitate the Red River carrying trade, H. C. Burbank had gone to Georgetown in February to arrange for the construction of a new steamboat.⁷ The plans to use the machinery of the Freighter in this steamboat had already been completed before the death of George Simpson. Now a sawmill was to be set up at Georgetown to prepare lumber for the boat, as well as for a warehouse. As the coming events were to teach, work on the new steamboat had been started none too soon.

Meanwhile, the trans-border trade and the transportation of goods by way of St. Paul continued. On June 11, 1861, the Pioneer, on its first trip of the season, arrived at Red River with a heavy cargo.⁸ Apparently its load, nearly sixty tons, was the largest the steamboat had brought down at one time. The return cargo was made up of buffalo robes and furs, mostly from the Hudson's Bay Company but also from free traders. One of the passengers to Red River had been J.C. Burbank,

7. Nor'Wester, March 1, 1861.

8. A.H.B.C., A. 12/42, Mactavish to Fraser, June 12, 1861.

who stayed in the Settlement until the return of the Pioneer from Georgetown. Thus Burbank saw to the essential details of the transport both in St. Paul and at the Red River Settlement. Under his direction the steamboat ran regularly all summer, although it did not go above the Goose Rapids after August. On October 26 after its last trip, the Pioneer, according to the Nor'Wester, was "safely moored" in Netley Creek for the winter.⁹ How safe this was to be, people in Red River were to find out before the winter was over. None the less, both in St. Paul and in the Red River Settlement it was felt that navigation on the Red had been established.

Navigation on the Red River, postal communications through the United States, and a steady growth of trade with St. Paul had all contributed to the ties of Red River with Minnesota. The Nor'Wester, with some justification but also with a tendency to overstate, saw in these economic relations the possibility of future political ties with the United States. It is true that, as far as trade and commerce went, the Settlement was largely dependent upon St. Paul. Moreover, competition between the Hudson's Bay Company and the American traders as well as the free traders had served to raise the prices of furs and buffalo robes.¹⁰ Although the prices on goods rose at the same time, people in Red River could always be sure of some quick profits from the fur trade.

9. Nor'Wester, November 1, 1861; A.H.B.C., A. 12/42, Mactavish to Fraser, October 31, 1861.

10. Nor'Wester, April 1, 1861.

Above all, friendly relations existed between Red River and St. Paul during these years. However, that the people in Red River were being "Americanized" as a result of trade relations with St. Paul is not certain.¹¹ In the time that Burbank was almost solely in charge of the transport, the Nor'Wester perhaps was right in referring to the St. Paul route as "the American Highway to Red River!"¹² During the remainder of the decade, however, the route was probably much more a Red River and Hudson's Bay Company road to, and through, the United States. But one consequence of the St. Paul route was that Americans were encouraged to come to Red River.

It does not appear that the number of Americans who came in the first part of the 1860's was very large. Nevertheless, they did make up a definite part of the population of Red River. The best known and the principal American trader was Norman W. Kittson. The fur trade and Kittson's relatives in St. Boniface were no doubt the two main reasons for his coming to Red River in the late 1850's. During the operation of the steamboat in 1860 and 1861, next to the Hudson's Bay Company, Kittson had been one of the largest importers. However, in the summer of 1861 he sold his business and establishment to Alexander Paul, an American trader from the Lake Superior area.¹³ Kittson soon withdrew

11. Ibid., September 28, 1860.

12. Ibid., August 15, 1861.

13. A.H.B.C., A. 12/42, Mactavish to Fraser, July 1, 1861.

to St. Paul, except for the occasional winter which he spent in the Settlement. On the other hand, Alexander Paul was determined to do an extensive trade in Kittson's former premises. He carried on a wholesale and retail business in dry goods, groceries, and hardware. By the number of furs he obtained from the free traders in the winter of 1861-1862, it was obvious that Alexander Paul had now become the main American fur trader in Red River.¹⁴

As far as the fur trade was concerned, other Americans were less prominent. In 1860 William Gomez Fonseca had opened a store with a small stock of goods.¹⁵ Although Fonseca settled down in Red River, he did not forget that he was an American citizen. In 1861 his contribution of five dollars to the Treasury Department "for the upholding of the U.S. Government" was noted by the St. Paul Daily Press.¹⁶ Another American trader who came to Red River in 1860 was E.L. Barber.¹⁷ However, no mention was made of his business by the Nor'Wester in these years. In 1862 Henry A. Bromely, agent for the North Western Fur Company in Minnesota, came to trade at the Settlement during the fur season.¹⁸ It appears, though, that he did not take up permanent residence.

Two Americans followed occupations other than the fur trade.

14. Nor'Wester, May 28, 1862.

15. Ibid., November 15, 1860.

16. St. Paul Daily Press, October 26, 1861. The small contribution was made to the Patriotic Loan.

17. W.L. Morton, ed., Alexander Begg's Journal and Other Papers Relative to the Red River Resistance of 1869-1870 (Toronto, 1956), p. 245.

18. Nor'Wester, May 28, 1862.

J.C. Johnstone came to Red River in 1860 to set up a brick-yard.¹⁹ About this time George Emmerling must have come to the Settlement.²⁰ Emmerling's Hotel was later to become a gathering place for Americans.

These, then, were some of the Americans in Red River up to the beginning of 1862. It does not appear that their influence went much beyond their trading activities at this time. But now, as in the years that lay ahead, their presence alone helped to emphasize the uncertainty of the future of Red River.

Meanwhile, J. C. Burbank had been preparing for the 1862 transport season. On March 5, 1862, the Nor'Wester announced the schedule and plans of "Burbank's Line".²¹ A number of improvements had been made. In the first place, the new steamboat, the International, would be ready for service in May. But there were not to be two steamboats navigating the Red. The Pioneer had sunk where it had been moored at the Settlement for the winter. However, the International, which was a larger steamboat, would be run between the Red River Settlement and Georgetown until the end of October; at Georgetown it would connect with four-horse stage coaches by which passengers could get to St. Paul. Secondly, a small company of troops had been stationed at

19. Ibid., August 14, 1860.

20. A. S. Morton, A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71 (Toronto, 1939), p. 854.

21. Nor'Wester, March 5, 1862.

Georgetown to protect the steamboat and the buildings from Indians. Moreover, Burbank had reduced the freight rates from St. Paul to Fort Garry from \$6.00 to \$5.00 per 100 lbs. for a shipment weighing less than two thousand pounds. Finally, Burbank had written in the advertisement that he had spent "a large amount of money to open the route," and, therefore, felt "justly entitled to the whole patronage of the Settlement."²²

It was clear from these words that the Burbank Line was hoping to expand its business in 1862. Indeed, Governor H.H. Berens in London was confident that the St. Paul route was "now so completely established that it henceforth be considered as one of the ordinary means of introducing supplies into the territory."²³ But Alexander Grant Dallas, the newly appointed Governor-in-Chief of Rupert's Land, to whom this had been written, was soon to find many faults with the way in which the route had been managed. The Burbank Line had been largely responsible for the transportation facilities and the transport of the Company's goods to Red River for almost two years. Burbank was now about to be asked to give an account of his management. And the person to whom Burbank had to answer was Governor Dallas.

22. Ibid.

23. A.H.B.C., D. 8/1, H.H. Berens to A.G. Dallas, April, 16, 1862.

CHAPTER V

GOVERNOR DALLAS AND DIFFICULTIES, 1862-1864

On May 18, 1862, Governor Dallas arrived at the Red River Settlement, Until Dallas' departure for England on May 17, 1864, the matter of communications by way of St. Paul was to occupy a prominent part of his time. He immediately found himself in difficulty with J. C. Burbank over the latter's past performance of the transport of the Hudson's Bay Company. None the less, Burbank was to continue to freight for the Company. But in 1863, the year when the contract between Burbank and the Hudson's Bay Company was to expire, the partnership was dissolved. In the same year the St. Paul route was beset by two further difficulties, the Sioux menace and the low state of water on the Red; both were old problems, but now the intensified hostility of the Sioux combined with poor navigation seriously hindered communications.

Dallas attempted to meet these difficulties, each in its turn. First, Norman W. Kittson, who had won the respect of George Simpson, was now appointed the special agent of the Hudson's Bay Company in St. Paul. Secondly, Dallas, for the most part, dealt wisely with the Sioux problem. Nevertheless, this vexatious question did impose a brief strain on the relations of Red River with St. Paul. Lastly, Dallas

dispatched Red River carts to get the 1863 shipment of goods from Georgetown. Some of these goods had to be brought in from as far as St. Cloud, and others from Fort Abercrombie, located on the Red River south of Georgetown.

In order to ensure better transportation for the future, Dallas explored the possibility of a new route through the United States. Then, at the beginning of 1864, Dallas, on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company, entered into a four-year freight contract with Henry Gager and Company of St. Cloud.

Despite many interruptions, trade between Red River and St. Paul continued during this time. Since St. Paul was not indifferent to the trade that it was drawing from the Red River Settlement, efforts were made to keep the channel of communications open. The mail system was improved in 1863. Moreover, transportation from St. Paul north was made available as far as Americans dared to go on account of the Sioux. This was usually St. Cloud.

Such, then, were the circumstances in which Governor Dallas was to find himself for two years. The first complication that Dallas encountered had to do with the Hudson's Bay Company's contract with the Burbank Brothers. J. C. Burbank, in whom George Simpson had placed so much confidence, was now, according to Dallas, found wanting in the management of the Company's transport. Before coming to Red River in 1862, Dallas had paid the Burbank Brothers a visit in St. Paul.¹ J. C.

1. A.H.B.C., A. 12/43, A. G. Dallas to T. Fraser, May 6, 1862.

Burbank, in recognition of the existing difficulties in the transport system, was willing to come to some mutually satisfactory arrangement with Dallas. However, Dallas wanted to know all the facts, especially those which were in the possession of Mr. Murray, the Company's officer who had been in charge at Georgetown, and William Mactavish. Thus began the negotiations between Dallas and Burbank that were to be drawn out for over a year.

At Red River, Dallas discovered that Mactavish was aware of the unsatisfactory management of the Company's transport via St. Paul. However, Dallas was surprised to learn that "Mactavish had never seen or known the contents of the steamboat contract."² That neither Simpson nor the governor and committee in London had sent Mactavish a copy of the agreement was, doubtless, a matter of neglect. It is true that the views of Simpson and Mactavish on having Burbank in charge at St. Paul had not quite coincided.³ Mactavish had recommended to Simpson that an officer of the Hudson's Bay Company should be stationed at St. Paul. But Simpson had justified his choice of Burbank on the ground that no other suitable person was available for the job. Certainly the task would have been too much for Mactavish to undertake on top of his duties as Governor of Assiniboia. With the Nor'Wester agitating for the end of Company rule, Mactavish, who headed the Council of Assiniboia,

2. Ibid., A. 12/43, Dallas to Fraser, January 20, 1863; see also ibid., A. 12/43, Dallas to Fraser, June 9, 1862.

3. Ibid., A. 12/42, Mactavish to Fraser, December 31, 1861.

was finding it ever more difficult to provide adequate government for the Red River Settlement. Nevertheless, he had given the transport system by way of St. Paul as much attention as he possibly could.

But now Dallas had found a person who, he thought, would be suitable as the agent of the Hudson's Bay Company at St. Paul. This was Norman W. Kittson. As agent of the Company, Kittson was to assume charge of the International and the transport of the Company's goods. By this Burbank was not, however, to be excluded from having a voice in the matter. It would be Kittson's foremost duty to see that the joint interests of Burbank and the Hudson's Bay Company were protected. Kittson was soon to justify this responsibility entrusted to his care. Besides gaining an experienced, trustworthy person to direct the transport of goods, Dallas felt that he had scored another point in favour of the Hudson's Bay Company. Dallas thought it quite probable that Kittson would have eventually established himself as a carrier of goods on the St. Paul route. Therefore, by appointing Kittson as special agent of the Company, Dallas had been successful in "converting him from an opponent into an ally."⁴

Next Dallas attempted to come to an understanding with Burbank. However, Dallas had many complaints, and his approach was not always tactful. The complaints of the Hudson's Bay Company were outlined in detail in a letter to the Burbank Brothers.⁵ First, the control of the

4. Ibid., A. 12/43, Dallas to Fraser, May 28, 1862.

5. Ibid., A. 12/43, Dallas to Messrs. J. C. and H. C. Burbank, May 24, 1862.

receipts and expenditures in connection with the transport business had been almost exclusively in the hands of Burbank. Neither Mactavish nor Murray had been consulted in this regard. Nor had the Hudson's Bay Company had a voice in the appointment of the crew of the steamboat. Dallas was aware that the Company was largely responsible for the lack of supervision over the transport of its goods;⁶ however, he did not admit this to Burbank. Second, Burbank had taken some of the land of the Company at Georgetown for his own use, and for other portions the Company's title was still in doubt. Third, Dallas said that the Hudson's Bay Company should not have been made to share in the expenses of the sawmill at Georgetown. Fourth, the loss of the Pioneer was charged to the negligence of the crew employed by Burbank. Finally, the goods of the Company had been handled carelessly with the result that there had been both loss and damage. Moreover, the goods of private parties had received preference in the transport from St. Paul to Red River. This had resulted in the Company's supplies being delayed at St. Paul or Georgetown. These were the points that Dallas thought Burbank should make some effort to correct or explain.

Burbank did not reply to every point, but his explanations indicate that the fault was not solely his. Burbank maintained that he had come to an understanding with George Simpson whereby the former had a free hand in the employment of help for the management of the

6. Ibid., A. 12/43, Dallas to Fraser, May 6, 1862.

steamboat.⁷ The sawmill had been taken into the steamboat account because the men who worked at the mill were the same who ran the steamboat. Furthermore, Burbank asked for some consideration for the fact that the amount of the Company's freight had fallen short of his expectations.⁸ Whereas the contract stated that the Company would provide about 250 tons of freight per year, Simpson had given Burbank to understand that the average freight that could be expected per year was about 500 tons. Consequently, Burbank had made the necessary arrangements and incurred heavy expenses to be able to transport this amount. He proposed, though, that this point could be settled when the present contract was extended. While Burbank, then, had some cause for expressing disappointment, he also had been careless in his management of the Georgetown post. According to Kittson, Burbank's agent had not properly cared for the Company's warehouse at that place.⁹

Then there was the matter regarding the freight of Red River traders and settlers. To this Burbank had nothing to say. Indeed, it was quite evident that the St. Paul route had to serve the needs of the

7. Ibid., A. 12/43, N. W. Kittson to the Hudson's Bay Co., June 23, 1862.

8. Ibid., A. 12/43, J.C. and H.C. Burbank to Mactavish, August 18, 1862.

9. Ibid., A. 12/43, Kittson to the Hudson's Bay Co., June 23, 1862.

people in Red River, as well as those of the Company. Moreover, if Burbank carried goods for the settlers and fur traders, traffic on the route would increase. This, of course, was to the advantage of Burbank. In the first place, therefore, through neglect on the part of both the Hudson's Bay Company and Burbank, the Company's goods had not all been transported satisfactorily. Secondly, the attempt of Burbank to satisfy both the demands of the Company and those of the whole Settlement had led to further complaints by Dallas. Finally, Burbank could not afford to neglect his own interests. The transportation of goods to Red River was attended with much expense. Unless there was sufficient traffic, the route could not be worked profitably. It is significant that throughout this time no evidence had been found that Burbank was interested in the St. Paul route beyond the profits that might result from the carrying trade.

Although the differences between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Burbank Brothers had not been completely settled, the transportation of goods and passengers between Red River and St. Paul had not been interrupted. On May 26, 1862, the International arrived at Fort Garry with supplies for the Company and goods for twenty-seven private importers.¹⁰ The steamboat had also brought over 160 passengers, both American and Canadian, who were passing through the Settlement on their way to the gold fields in British Columbia.¹¹ Although the

10. Nor'Wester, May 28, 1862.

11. A.H.B.C., A. 11/97, Mactavish to Fraser, May 28, 1862.

International, with a length of 137 feet, was larger than the Pioneer, the new steamboat was considered to be too long for the many tortuous bends in the upper part of the Red.¹² However, the shallow draft of the steamboat had been specially designed to overcome the problem of the low state of water in the Red during the summer.

That summer the International had made at least four trips between Georgetown and Red River by the end of July.¹⁴ After that it did not go above the Goose Rapids, and by the end of August the water in the Red had fallen so low that only one more trip was likely to be made. Burbank, of course, was anxious to run the steamboat as long as possible in order "to secure public confidence in the route."¹⁵ None the less, by September the International had been laid up for the winter.

The next reverse that traffic along the St. Paul route encountered was more serious. In September news reached the Red River Settlement that the Sioux had risen in Minnesota. The mail communications of Red River were soon cut off.¹⁶ Traffic to and from St. Paul almost ceased. However, the supplies from Georgetown were to be taken to Red River by means of a barge and Red River carts. The barge arrived at the Settlement safely; but the carts, under the supervision of N. W. Kittson, were stopped by the Indians and robbed of goods amounting to about twelve thousand dollars.¹⁷ It was clear that the plain road, which lay

12. Ibid.

13. Hargrave, Red River, p. 230.

14. Nor'Wester, July 23, 1862.

15. A.H.B.C., A. 11/97, Mactavish to Fraser, August 22, 1862.

16. Ibid., A. 11/97, Mactavish to Fraser, September 30, 1862.

17. M.H.S., Alexander Ramsey Papers, Kittson to A. Ramsey, September 1, 1863; Hargrave, op. cit., p. 249. These losses were later made up by the American government.

in Sioux territory, was no longer safe. To restore the mail service, therefore, the mail was sent by the Crow Wing Trail. By the end of October, the communications of Red River with St. Paul had partly been restored.

The Sioux were to have an adverse effect not only on the communications of Red River, but also on the Settlement itself. The departure of the Canadian Rifles in 1861 had left Red River unprotected. Now, according to information that had been received in Red River, the Sioux were planning to visit the Settlement. Therefore, in a petition signed by over one thousand people, the Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State for the Colonies, was requested to send troops for protection from the Sioux.¹⁸ The petition was forwarded to Newcastle by Governor H. H. Berens. However, Newcastle was not prepared to send troops to Red River. His view was that the defence of the Settlement should be secured first, by a local militia, and second, through the Hudson's Bay Company.¹⁹

British troops, then, were not available. And by the beginning of January, 1863, a party of over eighty Sioux had appeared at Red River. They had come for two reasons.²⁰ One was to get provisions for their starving families. Secondly, the Sioux wanted to find out what kind of

18. A.H.B.C., A. 12/43, Dallas to Fraser, December 20, 1862.

19. Ibid., D. 8/1, C. Fortescue to Berens, March 12, 1863.

20. Ibid., A. 11/97, Mactavish to Fraser, January 9, 1863.

a reception they would get from the half-breeds and Indians living on British soil. Since the Sioux had encountered no hostility and were satisfied with the overall treatment which they had received at the Settlement, they were bound to appear again. When Chief Little Crow with a band of Sioux arrived at Red River towards the end of May, Dallas got them to leave by giving them some food and presents, but not ammunition.²¹ Meantime, a large group of people in Red River had petitioned Governor Dallas and the Council of Assiniboia to raise volunteers for the defence of the Settlement.²² It was the armed métis, however, who were to remain the only defence of Red River against the Sioux.²³

But the people of the Settlement also had to deal with the Sioux on the way to St. Paul. The St. Paul route had become an essential part of the trade and communications of Red River. The Hudson's Bay Company had also come to depend largely on this route for the transport of freight. Therefore, Dallas, along with the people of Red River, was anxious to prevent any collision with the Sioux. For two reasons Dallas was led to believe that passage along the St. Paul route would

21. Ibid., A. 12/43, Dallas to Fraser, June 3, 1863.
On this occasion Dallas also gave some presents to the Saulteaux Indians who were camped at the Settlement. The favour shown to the Sioux had caused the Saulteaux to become jealous.

22. Ibid., A. 12/43, Dallas to Fraser, March 23, 1863.

23. Morton, Manitoba: A History, p. 112.

be relatively safe for the inhabitants of Red River. In the first place, he had received word from St. Paul that there would be a considerable number of American troops stationed at "various posts along the route."²⁴ Secondly, the Sioux had promised that they would not interfere with any people from the Settlement.²⁵ In fact, the Sioux had made it known that no British people would be molested by them. The two-wheeled Red River carts, as opposed to the four-wheeled American waggons, was one of the signs by which the Sioux recognized British citizens from Red River on the St. Paul route.²⁶

It was by means of cart trains that trade was resumed between Red River and St. Paul in the summer of 1863. The International made no trips during the season of navigation. Burbank did not run the steamboat because of the low water in the Red and due to the Sioux threat to which the American crew of the International would have been exposed. Furthermore, Burbank did not fulfill his freight contract with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1863. Because of Burbank's differences with the Hudson's Bay Company, there seemed to be a natural unwillingness on his part to perform the transport. It was obvious, though, that Burbank was unable to get American teamsters to go to Red River because of the

24. A.H.B.C., A. 12/43, Dallas to Fraser, February 5, 1863.

25. Ibid., A. 12/43, Dallas to Gov. and Comm., June 8, 1863.

26. Hargrave, op.cit., p. 292.

Sioux threat. Moreover, under these circumstances, the goods were much safer in the hands of the Red River people.

By the beginning of June, the carts of the traders and the Hudson's Bay Company had left for St. Paul.²⁷ Burbank had done his part by carrying the goods as far as St. Cloud. And in July the Nor'Wester reported that the brigade of carts had arrived back at Red River safely.²⁸ No one had been molested by the Sioux. Despite the Sioux troubles, there is reason to believe that there was actually a slight increase in trade along the St. Paul route in 1863. By July, Joseph Lemay, Collector of Customs for the American government at Pembina, had collected duties of about three thousand dollars on furs from Red River.²⁹ It remained true that not all the goods of private importers were purchased in St. Paul. That year sixty-one people at Red River received merchandise from England via St. Paul.³⁰ One reason for the increase in traffic on the St. Paul route was because the Hudson's Bay Company had closed the York Factory route to private traders in 1863.³¹ Failure of navigation on the Red had led to this move by the Company.

If Red River continued to maintain its connection with St. Paul in these years, the latter also made efforts to keep up its northern trade.

27. Nor'Wester, June 2, 1863.

28. Ibid., July 22, 1863.

29. Ibid., August 5, 1863.

30. Ibid., September 16, 1863.

31. Ibid., June 30, 1863.

The outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 had created a heavy demand for buffalo robes for the American troops.³² Soon this export from Red River was selling at a good price. The year 1863 also saw further improvements in the mail service to Red River. Beginning on April 1, mail deliveries from St. Paul to Pembina were to be made twice a week. This, however, did not mean that the mail would reach Red River regularly. The mail carrier always had to count on being delayed by the Sioux. Then, in the fall of 1863, Senator Alexander Ramsey was successful in making arrangements for the mail to pass from St. Paul to Pembina in "through bags" instead of "way bags".³³ No longer were the entire contents of the mailbag examined at every stop. The new system had come upon the request of Governor Dallas, and by 1864 the mail service to Red River was carried out much more efficiently. In 1863 Senator Ramsey, on behalf of the United States government concluded a treaty with the Red Lake Indians for the extinction of their title to the lands of the Red River valley. The people of St. Paul now looked forward to less interruption of trade and travel from Red River. Moreover, it was hoped that the treaty would be a means of the opening of northern Minnesota to the Settlement.

But northern Minnesota during the 1860's remained largely unsettled, and the Sioux continued to wander over these lands. The people of Red River, too, had rejoiced that the Indian treaty would result in better

32. St. Paul Daily Press, November 9, 1861.

33. Hargrave, op. cit., pp. 304-305.

communication with St. Paul.³⁴ Furthermore, they hoped that there would be no more visits from the refugee Sioux. This last was to prove a vain hope. That year the failure of the potato crop, the reduced returns from the grain crops, and the partial failure of the fall buffalo hunt had caused a shortage of food and provisions in the Settlement.³⁵ The arrival at Pembina of about four hundred American cavalry under Major E.A.C. Hatch had created a market in Red River; it had also made a further demand on the short supply of provisions at the Settlement.³⁶ Finally, when some five hundred Sioux arrived at Red River in December, 1863, Governor Dallas saw that it would be difficult to feed these starving families.

In seeking to solve this problem, Dallas attempted to keep three main aims in mind. In the first place, a collision with the Sioux should be avoided. Secondly, in order to protect the Settlement, it was essential that the Sioux be persuaded to leave. Third, Dallas was careful to maintain friendly relations with the Americans troops at Pembina.

It was clear that a collision with the Sioux would result in the needless loss of life and the damage of property in the Settlement. Furthermore, once the hostility of the Sioux had been incurred, it would be necessary to call in Hatch's troops from Pembina. Because this was a matter that would involve Red River in an international problem, Dallas

34. Nor'Wester, October 14, 1863.

35. A.H.B.C., A. 12/43, Dallas to Fraser, December 11, 1863.

36. Ibid.

tried to keep clear of it as long as possible. Therefore, after failing to persuade the Sioux to leave by small offers of provisions, Dallas secured permission from the Council of Assiniboia to supply the Indians with a larger quantity of provisions, which would be paid for out of public funds.³⁷ The Sioux were then furnished with food, clothing, and sleds to transport the provisions. The understanding was that they would leave the Settlement and proceed to Turtle Mountain. However, the Sioux went only as far as the White Horse Plain, where they camped on the north side of the Assiniboine. Here their presence was still a danger to the Settlement.

The danger had been somewhat lessened by the refusal of Dallas to give the Sioux ammunition, as he had earlier intended to do.³⁸ The ammunition, of course, was to be used only to hunt game. None the less, many of the settlers became so alarmed that they urged Dallas either to invite the intervention of American troops from Pembina, or to arm the people in the Settlement and drive the Sioux away. Dallas was reluctant to follow either one of the courses that had been suggested. Hatch had instructions from General H. H. Sibley not to follow the Sioux across the line.³⁹ But when the settlers persisted that some action be taken,

37. P.A.M., Council of Assiniboia, Minutes, December 19, 1863.

38. Ibid., January 7, 1864; A.H.B.C., A. 12/43, Dallas to Fraser, December 11, 1863; ibid., A. 12/43, Dallas to Fraser, February 24, 1864.

39. A.H.B.C., A. 12/43, Dallas to Lord Lyons, February 25, 1864; A.C. Gluek, Jr., "The Sioux Uprising, A Problem in International Relations," Minnesota History Bulletin (St. Paul, 1955), p. 323.

and following the offer of Hatch to capture the Sioux into British territory,⁴⁰ Dallas granted the American troops permission to cross the border. St. Paul had already become less sympathetic to the troubles of the Red River people because the Settlement appeared to be a refuge for the Sioux who had been responsible for the Indian massacres in Minnesota.⁴¹ As Dallas later admitted, this pressure from the American press had been another reason why he had granted the request of Major Hatch.⁴² However, by the beginning of May, the American troops had retired to Fort Abercrombie without having followed the Sioux into British territory. Although the Sioux had soon taken their departure from Red River, the Settlement had not seen the last of them.

Meantime, Dallas had also been concerning himself with the transport by way of St. Paul. He had decided, by the summer of 1863, that the Hudson's Bay Company's contract with the Burbank Brothers would not be renewed. In this matter the governor and committee in London had left the decision up to Dallas.⁴³ Therefore, upon the expiry of the contract, the Company had purchased the Burbank Brothers' share in the

40. A.H.B.C., A. 12/43, Major E.A.C. Hatch to Dallas, March 4, 1864.

41. St. Paul Weekly Pioneer and Democrat, February 5, 1864.

42. A.H.B.C., A. 12/43, Dallas to Fraser, May 10, 1864.

43. Ibid., D. 8/1, Berens to Dallas, April 15, 1863.

International and the sawmill at Georgetown for about \$5,500.⁴⁴ Thus the Hudson's Bay Company became the sole owner of the steamboat and the Georgetown post, including the sawmill. The title for the Company's lands at Georgetown had been secured. Only one lot remained in dispute with a squatter. And by the spring of 1864, the Company had settled all its differences with Burbank.⁴⁵ Besides being dissatisfied with Burbank's performance of the transport, both Dallas and Mactavish thought that Burbank had been too active in furthering his own interests, especially those of the Minnesota Stage Company. It was true that Burbank had exerted himself to create traffic on the St. Paul route. Since this would inevitably lead to the opening of Rupert's Land to settlement, Dallas had decided to break off relations with Burbank. Although the Hudson's Bay Company did not do any further business with J. C. Burbank until later, he continued to take orders for people at Red River. Burbank also kept up his passenger and freight service between St. Paul and St. Cloud.

Delay in goods from England to Red River had, however, also been caused between Montreal and St. Paul. The Grand Trunk Railway Company was responsible for this part of the route. But the governor and committee in London were reluctant to discontinue the route which the Grand Trunk was using between Montreal and St. Paul. Moreover, the Grand

44. Ibid., A. 12/43, Dallas to Fraser, November 14, 1863.

45. Ibid., D. 8/1, E. Head to Dallas, March 5, 1864, ibid., A. 12/43 Dallas to Fraser, March 29, 1864.

Trunk had adopted measures to avoid future irregularities in the transport of goods.⁴⁶ Dallas, however, thought that a further improvement could be made by having the Grand Trunk lay the goods down at Superior City on Lake Superior. From here the goods would be transported overland by way of Crow Wing to meet the steamboat on the Red River.

Dallas could see two advantages in this route which did not run through St. Paul. First, there was continuous water carriage to Superior City, and second, the land route was more out of the way of the Sioux.⁴⁷ On the other hand, the governor and committee were satisfied with the existing route. They had already decided that the arrangements with the Grand Trunk whereby the Hudson's Bay Company received through bills of lading for all goods from England to St. Paul would be continued.⁴⁸

But Dallas was not to be persuaded so easily. Consequently, he had instructed Norman W. Kittson to obtain more definite information on the road by Superior City. Late in 1863, Kittson reported on the conditions of the road between Superior City and Crow Wing.⁴⁹ The people in Superior City had shown an immediate interest in the project. Property owners were willing to promote the construction of the road if they could do so in city property rather than by cash. Therefore, Kittson, on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company, had made a proposal to the interested parties. If they would pay the Company five thousand dollars in

46. Ibid., D. 8/1, Berens to Dallas, April 16, 1862.

47. Ibid., A. 12/43, Dallas to Fraser, April 29, 1863.

48. Ibid., D. 8/1, Berens to Dallas, April 15, 1863.

49. Ibid., A. 12/43, Kittson to Dallas, November 23, 1863.

cash and transfer to it twenty thousand dollars in city property, the Hudson's Bay Company would undertake the building of the road.

Kittson estimated that about twenty thousand dollars would have to be spent before the road could be used. He was impressed with the advantages of the route, and had been encouraged by the fact that the required cash had almost been raised before he left Superior City.

However, the early enthusiasm of the property owners in Superior City was not to last. And in the end the Hudson's Bay Company stayed with the St. Paul route.

From time to time Dallas had considered giving up the route through American territory entirely. This, of course, meant that the Hudson's Bay Company would have to rely completely on the York Factory route. But the difficulties with the York tripmen were increasing each year. Therefore, Dallas did not revert to the way by Hudson's Bay. Instead, he followed the idea of Simpson and again contracted with Americans to transport the Company's goods via St. Paul.

In March, 1864, shortly before his final departure for England, Dallas, for the Hudson's Bay Company, entered into a steamboat contract with Henry Gager and Company of St. Cloud.⁵⁰ Other members of the Gager Company were J. B. Mills, J. R. Harris, and G. R. Bentley. By this agreement the Hudson's Bay Company sold the International, the barge, and the warehouse at Georgetown to the Gager Company for fifteen thousand dollars. The International was to be under the control of the Gager

50. Ibid., A. 12/43, Dallas to Fraser, May 5, 1864.

Company, but it would not be transferred to that Company as its property until the steamboat was paid for in full. All the freight for the Hudson's Bay Company would be transported by these American contractors from St. Paul to Fort Garry for the four seasons from May, 1864 to November, 1867. The rate was \$4.60 per 100 lbs. from St. Paul to Fort Garry, and \$2.30 per 100 lbs. for return freight. Each party to the contract was subject to a penalty upon failure to deliver the required amount of goods. Furthermore, in the event that the transportation contract should fail completely, the Gager Company would forfeit the payments on the International and the steamboat would once more become the sole property of the Hudson's Bay Company.

In this way, Dallas hoped to safeguard the Hudson's Bay Company from possible losses in the transport of its goods. Moreover, he thought that the complications which had arisen in connection with the Burbank Brothers would not be repeated. It is true that Dallas had again fallen back on American contractors to transport the Company's goods by way of St. Paul. However, he realized that it could thus be done on lower terms than if the Hudson's Bay Company were to perform the transport.⁵¹ Whereas the new contract afforded the Hudson's Bay Company more protection, there was still no guarantee that it would work out successfully. But as George Simpson had not lived to see the final outcome of the contract with the Burbank Brothers, so Dallas was no longer to be in Red River when the Gager Company ran into difficulties.

51. Ibid.

Dallas had faced numerous problems in connection with the St. Paul route during his short stay in Red River. However, the Hudson's Bay Company's differences with Burbank had been finally settled. On the whole, Dallas had handled the Sioux problem well. The Red River people had not been harmed on the way to St. Paul, and the Settlement had temporarily been rid of the Sioux. Dallas had made provision for the future transport of the Company's goods by way of St. Paul. And it was fairly clear that the Hudson's Bay Company intended to continue the use of this route.

Not only Dallas, however, had been concerned with the St. Paul route. Both the people of Red River and the St. Paul merchants had put forth efforts to maintain the trans-border trade and to improve communications. Nevertheless, the future of the communications of Red River with the outside world had not been finally decided. True, in the spring of 1864, the Red River Settlement looked forward to improved communications with St. Paul. But there were still some elements of uncertainty in the St. Paul route. Moreover, Canadian interest in Red River had again been actively revived. Therefore, besides the political uncertainty that the Red River Settlement was faced with in these years, it also had reason to be concerned about what would happen to its communications system.

CHAPTER VI

RED RIVER CARTS SURVIVE OTHER PLANS, 1864-1866

The Red River cart brigade was the chief means of transportation on the St. Paul route from 1864 to 1866. The low state of the water in the Red River made navigation from Georgetown to the Settlement almost impossible. Therefore, the International made only a few trips during this time. Nor were the American waggons successfully used in the transport of supplies to Red River. The Gager Company was unable to freight goods all the way to Fort Garry for reasons arising out of the Civil War and the Sioux menace.

During this time the St. Paul route also remained the main line of communication of Red River. Dallas had hoped to transport the freight of the Hudson's Bay Company by way of Superior City. Thus St. Paul would have been bypassed. But in 1866 the proposed Superior City road had not materialized. It also appeared that Canadian interest in the Northwest was going to affect the communications of Red River. Early in 1864 it seemed almost certain that Red River was about to be connected to Canada by a postal and telegraph road. Thus a number of plans were underway to provide transportation and communications for the Red River Settlement. But in the end these needs were largely met by the use of Red River carts on the St. Paul route.

One of the first of these projects that was to fail in 1864 was the

proposed mail and telegraph line from Canada. Since the year 1860, no mail had been carried to Red River by the Canadian route. But in 1862 circumstances were operating to cause Canadians to look westward once more. The outbreak of the American Civil War and the tension between Britain and the North over the Trent affair had given the Canadian government much cause for concern. The Cartier-Macdonald government was now seriously thinking that union of the British North American colonies would supply the key to the survival of Canada. Since the Northwest had become linked with the idea of colonial federation as early as 1858, westward expansion was again given the attention of the government. Thus in April, 1862, the Cartier-MacDonald ministry had suggested to Governor Dallas that Canada and the Hudson's Bay Company should jointly undertake to construct a post road and telegraph line from Canada to British Columbia.¹ Canada would provide communications to the height of land west of Lake Superior, and the Company was to complete the line to the Pacific. Although the Hudson's Bay Company did not consider the proposal, it was not opposed to the idea that Canada and Britain enter upon the project.

Therefore the J. S. MacDonald-Sicotte government, in office since May, 1862, turned to Britain for assistance. Through L. V. Sicotte and W. P. Howland, who had gone to London late in 1862, the Canadian ministry expressed its willingness to subsidize part of the mail and

1. Galbraith, The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor, 1821-1869. p. 373.

telegraph communications to the Pacific on the condition that Britain and British Columbia would share in the cost. At this point Edward Watkin, president of the Grand Trunk Railway Company, became interested in the project. The telegraph project tied in with Watkin's plan to save the Grand Trunk from its financial difficulties by extending the railway through Minnesota and the Saskatchewan valley to the Pacific. Therefore, Watkin and some London capitalists joined the proposed enterprise. The result was that the Atlantic and Pacific Transit and Telegraph Company was organized.

In 1863 this company was to be joined by the Hudson's Bay Company in the telegraph project. That year the International Financial Society was organized, and in June it purchased the stock of the Hudson's Bay Company. The reorganized Company had at least two important stockholders who were interested in Canadian communications. One was Edward Watkin, and the other was the new Governor, Sir Edmund Head, formerly Governor-General of Canada.

Meanwhile, both the Canadian party in Red River and the Canadian government attempted to create interest in the proposed communications. Early in 1863 James Ross, son of Alexander Ross, circulated a petition in Red River which requested that the British and Canadian governments construct a telegraph line from Canada to Red River.² The Canadian government in February, 1863, placed before the legislature a request

2. Nor'Wester, January 24, 1863.

for fifty thousand dollars to promote postal and telegraphic communications with British Columbia. Again in August, Governor-General Monck asked the legislature to consider the importance of opening communications to the Northwest.³

But while Canada and Britain remained undecided about the project, Watkin persuaded the Hudson's Bay Company to begin construction of the line. Accordingly, in the spring of 1864, the Company sent John Roe, a retired chief factor, to survey the telegraph route from Fort Garry to the Pacific. The Hudson's Bay Company also purchased telegraph wire of which over seventy tons were sent to Red River.⁴ But the Company was the only party that had moved ahead. The J. S. Macdonald-Dorion government in February, 1864, gave up the plan of western communications which the former ministry had proposed. The fact was that the overburdened treasury of the government was unable to bear the cost of the telegraph project. The unused bundles of wire at Red River were to remind the Canadian party that Canada was still not able to stretch her resources so as to provide the Red River Settlement with communications.

Besides the attempt to build a telegraph line from Canada, another expected event had seemed to indicate that the St. Paul route would not receive such extensive use by the Red River people in the future. In

3. P.A.M., Parliamentary Debates, Legislative Council, August 14, 1863.

4. Galbraith, op. cit., p. 394.

1864 there was a probability that Congress would repeal the Bonding Act by which the Red River could import British goods through American territory duty-free. If the people in the Settlement could no longer transport their imports from England in bond through the United States, they would be compelled to follow either one of two alternatives.⁵ The first way out was to discontinue the purchases of English manufactures and increase their imports from the United States. But this was not a good course to take because goods from England were specially manufactured to suit the needs of the fur trade. Moreover, the recent increase in the price of American goods was another reason why it would be more advantageous to continue importing from England. The second alternative was that English goods would henceforth have to be brought in over British territory rather than by way of St. Paul. The departure of the American troops from Pembina, which increased the danger from the Sioux on the St. Paul route, gave force to this argument. However, Red River was able to continue to transport English imports in bond through the United States. Furthermore, there was little hope in 1864 that a Canadian route would immediately be opened to Red River.

It was clear, then, that the St. Paul route was to remain important to the Red River Settlement. But the method of transportation was always somewhat uncertain. Whereas by 1861 navigation on the Red River of the North seemed to be established, between 1863 and 1866 the

5. Nor'Wester, April 26, 1864.

International was hardly used. But after 1864 this was not the fault of the Gager Company which was in charge of the steamboat for some time at least. The large size of the boat and low water in the Red combined to keep the International laid up most of the time. On May 1, 1864, the steamboat, with no freight and only a few passengers, arrived at the Red River Settlement.⁶ It was to be her one and only trip that season. In July the Nor'Wester reported that the steamboat was stranded on the Goose Rapids. The 1865 navigation season was to be no better. It appears that the steamboat made no more than one trip that year.⁷ Chief Factor J. R. Clare wrote the London committee that it would be better to leave the International "out of our calculations in all future schemes of transport."⁸ These doubts about navigation on the Red were expressed in spring when the water was usually at its highest. In May, 1866, Clare thought it uncertain that the steamboat would be of any service during that summer.⁹ And in June Mactavish wrote that the steamboat had been "unable to make a single trip".¹⁰ Such were the

6. Ibid., May 10, 1864.

7. A.H.B.C., A. 12/44, Mactavish to Fraser, February 19, 1866.

8. Ibid., A. 11/98, J. R. Clare to Fraser, April 10, 1865.
Chief Factor J. R. Clare was now in charge of the fur trade of the Hudson's Bay Company at Fort Garry.

9. Ibid., A. 11/98, Clare to Fraser, May 15, 1866.

10. Ibid., A. 12/44, Mactavish to Fraser, June 13, 1866.

discouraging reports of the navigation on the Red in these years.

However, according to the contract with the Hudson's Bay Company, the Gager Company was still obligated to transport goods to Fort Garry. Since the steamboat could not be used, the four-wheeled American waggons, driven by American teamsters, were to carry the freight. In July, 1864, it was reported that two large trains of Gager's waggons were on their way to the Red River Settlement.¹¹ However, from dread of the Sioux the American teamsters had not brought the goods beyond Georgetown.¹² Nor did the Gager Company transport any goods for Red River farther than Georgetown after that.

One of the main reasons for the failure of the Gager Company was, of course, the Sioux. Gager could not get his teamsters to travel the long distance between Georgetown and Fort Garry without a military escort.¹³ During the summer of 1864 three of his men had been killed by the Sioux. Gager also claimed that some of the people from Red River had intentionally discouraged the American teamsters from making the journey by emphasizing the danger of the Sioux.¹⁴

Then, circumstances related to the Civil War had also operated to bring about the failure of the Gager Company. In 1860 the population of Minnesota was 172,023. Although the population steadily

11. Nor'Wester, July 13, 1864.

12. A.H.B.C., A. 11/97, Mactavish to W. G. Smith, July 8, 1864.

13. Ibid., A. 11/98, H. Gager and Co. to Kittson, March 4, 1865.

14. Ibid.

increased from 1860 to 1865, the war had caused a labour shortage. Over twenty thousand men from Minnesota had gone to war.¹⁵ This was a second reason why Gager had found it difficult to get labour for his transport business.¹⁶ Moreover, the wages for labourers had risen considerably. In 1861, when there was still an adequate supply of labour, teamsters could be had at fifteen dollars per month; now they were getting fifty dollars per month.¹⁷

Although good relations were maintained between the Gager Company and the Hudson's Bay Company, the former had applied to be released from the steamboat and freight contract in 1865.¹⁸ It is not clear what arrangements the Hudson's Bay Company now made with Gager. It would seem, though, that the Gager Company continued to transport the goods of the Hudson's Bay Company to Georgetown on a limited basis until 1867.¹⁹ Since no more mention can be found of the Gager Company after that, it would also follow that the International and the Georgetown post had gone back to the Hudson's Bay Company. Obviously the Gager Company had not operated as successfully as J. C. Burbank. Nor had Gager created as much traffic on the St. Paul route. In this last matter,

15. R. C. Loehr, "The State of Minnesota: 1860-1870," Gopher Historian, XVII (Spring, 1963), no. 3, p. 6.

16. A.H.B.C., A. 11/98, Gager and Co. to Kittson, March 4, 1865.

17. Ibid.

18. A.H.B.C., A. 11/98, Clare to Fraser, April 10, 1865.

19. Ibid., D. 9/1, Mactavish to Kittson, June 2, 1867.

the Civil War had played no small part. The war had caused St. Paul to look south in these years.

Meanwhile, the Hudson's Bay Company had fallen back on its own resources and the help of the Red River settlers to carry its freight between Fort Garry and Georgetown. Furthermore, these years were to mark a firmer alliance between the Hudson's Bay Company and the people of Red River, the Canadian party excepted. Chief Factor Clare made it a policy to pay good prices for the furs of some of the free traders. This, of course, was done largely to compete against the American traders in the Settlement. It was also done "to keep up a good feeling among the half-breeds" to the Hudson's Bay Company rule.²⁰ Good relations were also furthered when the Company employed Red River settlers to freight the Company's goods. Clare wrote that it would prove "an extremely popular measure to the settlers," who had "viewed with very jealous eyes the employment of American labour" by the Company.²¹ Perhaps this helps to explain the attitude of the Red River settlers to the American teamsters as observed by Gager.

But the failure of the American teamsters was not the only reason why Red River settlers were able to find profitable employment in the cart business. The almost complete failure of steam navigation during this time was a second factor. In fact, the poor people in the

20. Ibid., A. 11/98, Clare to Fraser, January 16, 1865.

21. Ibid., A. 11/98 Clare to Fraser, April 10, 1865.

Settlement were against steam navigation for three reasons.²² First, if the steamboat ran regularly, they were deprived of the profits to be gained from the cart business. This occupation was particularly sought after in years when the buffalo hunt or the crops failed. Second, the wood on the banks of the Red River, which the settlers used, had become scarce as the steamboat had taken much of it for fuel. Third, the steamboat had an adverse effect on the supply of fish in the Red River. In 1865, when the International was not running regularly, Clare reported that there was an abundance of fish available for the settlers.²³

It was evident, then, that the settlers welcomed the more extensive use of the Red River carts by the Hudson's Bay Company. In the summer of 1864 Governor Mactavish dispatched between three and four hundred carts to get the goods from Georgetown.²⁴ In 1865 and 1866 the Red River cart brigades continued to take the furs and buffalo robes of the Company and the private traders to Georgetown or St. Paul; they returned with imports both from England and St. Paul. In 1866 Mactavish wrote that the imports by way of St. Paul had been received with great regularity.²⁵ During this time J. C. Burbank also continued his arrangements of transporting goods from England to St. Paul for the people of Red River.²⁶ Thus St. Paul remained the principal economic

22. Mgr. Taché, Sketch of the North-West of America (Montreal, 1870), Translated from the French by Captain D.R. Cameron, p. 42.

23. A.H.B.C., A. 11/98, Clare to Fraser, April 10, 1865.

24. Ibid., A. 11/97, Mactavish to Smith, July 8, 1864.

25. Ibid., A. 12/44, Mactavish to Gov. and Comm., August 22, 1866.

26. Nor'Wester, August 3, 1864; ibid., April 8, 1865.

outlet of the Red River Settlement.

There had been some possibility, though, that Superior City would become an alternative outlet, at least for the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1865 Kittson, on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company, had agreed to repair the Crow Wing and Superior City road. On the other hand, the interested property holders in Superior City agreed to pay the Company ten thousand dollars in county tax certificates, and secure for it real estate to the value of fifteen thousand dollars.²⁷ The agreement was subject to the approval of the Hudson's Bay Company; and the Company would not begin construction until it received the specified payments. While Kittson thought that this would be a good summer road, he was willing to admit that it would not measure up to the St. Paul route.

However, by the fall of 1866 nothing had come of the proposed project. Construction on the road had not been started by the Hudson's Bay Company. The small property owners, who resided in Superior City, had made a considerable effort to promote the road. But the large property holders, who were apparently all non-resident, remained indifferent to the project.²⁸ Kittson brought the matter up once more in the spring of 1867. But by then Governor Mactavish had lost interest. He was not inclined to renew negotiations with the property owners at Superior City because in the end neither they nor the Company would be satisfied with

27. A.H.B.C., A. 12/44, Kittson to Mactavish, December 26, 1865.

28. Ibid., A. 12/44, Mactavish to Gov. and Comm., August 22, 1866.

the arrangement.²⁹ Furthermore, Mactavish thought that the proposed road from Superior City to Crow Wing would require a much larger expenditure than had been estimated earlier. And so the matter was dropped.

Another project had come to an end, and it helped to underline the fact that most of the traffic of Red River still went by way of St. Paul. On this route the Red River cart had once more emerged as the chief means of travel. The cart brigades to St. Paul had indeed survived the other transportation and communication plans which had been under-way during this time. It is true, too, that the carts had carried the freight with reasonable regularity and minimum loss. Nevertheless, the cart business had survived precariously. In the first place, the existence of cart travel to St. Paul was partly based on the goodwill of the Sioux. Between 1864 and 1866 the Sioux had, in indefinite numbers, repeated their visits to the Red River Settlement. There had been some minor disturbances but no serious collision had taken place. Nor had much difficulty been experienced enroute to St. Paul on account of the Sioux. But the Sioux remained a potential danger. This was evident from the fact that a cart driver was armed with a gun, powder, and shot.³⁰ Secondly, the revived cart business was also based

29. Ibid., D. 9/1, Mactavish to Kittson, March 25, 1867.

30. W. G. Forseca, "On the St. Paul Trail in the Sixties," Transactions and Proceedings of the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, 1900, no. 56, p. 4.

on the failure of steam navigation on the Red. Should navigation improve, the cart transport would obviously be checked. Finally, the cart business was based on the stagnant economy of Red River. Many of the half-breeds cared little for farming. Since the buffalo hunt and a small trade in furs offered only part-time employment, the poorer people in the Settlement augmented their small earnings by tripping to St. Paul. But each year, as the buffalo frontier was pushed farther southwest, the hunt became more uncertain. It also appeared by the middle of the 1860's that the fur trade in Red River was about to be replaced by agriculture. It was doubtful whether the métis would adjust readily to this new economy. Moreover, it was certain that the Red River carts could not adequately serve the transportation needs of a grain trade.

But for a few more years the Red River settlers were to find limited employment by carting to St. Paul. In the immediate future this employment became more limited because the International once more was able to ply the waters of the Red. Several trips were made by the steamboat in 1867, and in 1868 and 1869 the water in the Red River had risen enough to allow regular navigation in the early summer months.³¹ Despite the fact that the steamboat ran more often, a number of private traders still carried their freight by carts. Thus during the last years of the Red River Settlement, travel on the St. Paul route was by the Hudson's Bay Company's steamboat and by the Red River carts.

31. A.H.B.C., A. 12/44, Mactavish to Smith, June 3, 1867; ibid., A. 12/45, Mactavish to Smith, July 27, 1868; ibid., A. 12/45, Mactavish to Smith, August 31, 1869.

Until 1866 there was every indication that St. Paul was chiefly interested in Red River as a source of trade and commerce. On the other hand, Red River had carried on a large part of its trade with St. Paul, and had depended on Minnesota for its system of communications with England and Canada. The obvious connection that had grown up between St. Paul and the Red River Settlement was an economic one. There was, however, a growing uncertainty as to the future of this British colony in the heart of North America. Geographically, the Red River Settlement was separated from Canada by the Canadian Shield; its proximity to the American frontier only served to emphasize this division. The question was whether a political character was eventually to be imposed upon the relationship between Red River and St. Paul.

PART III

THE QUESTION OF AMERICAN INTEREST IN RED RIVER, 1866-1870

CHAPTER VII

TWO DIMENSIONS OF AMERICAN INTEREST, 1866-1868

The St. Paul route had operated to bring about strong commercial ties between Red River and St. Paul. These trade relations were not to slacken after 1866. Therefore, one dimension of American interest in Red River was of an economic nature. This interest was particularly that of Minnesota, and more specifically that of the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce.

But in 1866 a second dimension of American interest was added to the well-established economic one. The political interest in Red River, which had always been present in smaller or greater measure, was now spelled out in terms of annexation.

It is true that the economic and political interests of Americans in Red River were really closely related. It had always been hoped by American expansionists that the second would naturally grow out of the first. But it seemed that the expansionists had become impatient with the slow way in which geography and the trans-border trade were working. Economically and geographically, the Red River valley formed a natural unit. It was the aim of James Wickes Taylor, the leading expansionist of the American Northwest, to give this region a uniform political character. This, of course, was only one aspect of Taylor's continental

plan. But if continentalism could have its way in the Red River valley, a big step would have been taken in the direction of continental union.

Taylor had not been idle in his position as special agent of the Treasury Department. On May 20, 1862, the House of Representatives had adopted a resolution whereby S. P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, was requested to provide the House with information on the relations between the United States and Northwest British America.¹ The House was particularly interested in the central districts of the Red River of the North and the Saskatchewan. Accordingly, in June Secretary Chase presented Taylor's extensive report to the House of Representatives. The report was called Relations Between the United States and Northwest British America. Thus Taylor had been keeping the federal government informed on the trade going on between the Red River Settlement and Minnesota.

Taylor's second opportunity came in 1866. The reciprocity agreement between Canada and the United States had expired in March of that year. Following this, on March 28, the House of Representatives passed a resolution requesting a report on the commercial relations of the United States with British America.² Again Taylor drew up a detailed paper on the subject of American trade with the British

1. House Executive Documents, 37 Congress, 2 session, no. 146.

2. Ibid., 39 Congress, 1 session, no. 128.

colonies. But in the closing pages of his report, Taylor also expressed his views on the political relations between the American Republic and British North America. Nor did he stop here. Included in his report was a proposition that Congress should pass "An Act for the admission of the States of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Canada East, and Canada West, and for the organization of the Territories of Selkirk, Saskatchewan, and Columbia."³

It was not long before action was taken on Taylor's proposal. In July, 1866, General N. P. Banks, Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs, introduced a bill calling for the annexation of British North America to the United States. The bill had been drafted by James W. Taylor. It not only provided for the admission of the British colonies, but by the bill the United States proposed to buy the Hudson's Bay Company's territory for ten million dollars. Although the House of Representatives did not vote on the bill, American newspapers busied themselves with annexation talk for some time.⁴ The St. Paul papers, too, took careful note of the Taylor-Banks bill. The St. Paul Weekly Pioneer carried large headlines announcing the annexation measure, but made no comments.⁵

3. Ibid.

4. Theodore C. Blegen, "A Plan for the Union of British North America and the United States," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, IV (March, 1918), p. 475.

5. St. Paul Weekly Pioneer, July 13, 1866.

There is no doubt that Minnesotans were interested in the annexation of the British Northwest. However, the Minnesota legislature was not to make an open statement until a little later. In 1862 the legislature, in a memorial to Congress, had urged that all obstacles to the transit of mails, merchandise, and emigrants along the St. Paul route to Red River should be removed.⁶ At that time Minnesota had desired none other than commercial relations with its northern neighbours. On the other hand, the legislature felt certain that the Americanization of Red River was inevitable if England would not take measures to bring about effective government in the Settlement. Now, in 1866, England was still governing Red River through the Hudson's Bay Company. And from the pages of the Nor'Wester, Minnesotans concluded that the Settlement was becoming more dissatisfied with this form of government. However, the Minnesota legislature did not take any action until after Alexander Ramsey had made a move in the federal government.

On December 7, 1867, Senator Ramsey introduced a bill in the Senate to restore the reciprocity treaty between Canada and the United States. But in return for these reciprocal trade relations, Canada was asked to cede to the United States that part of British North America west of ninety degrees longitude.⁷ The bill also provided

6. Nor'Wester, February 19, 1862.

7. Senate Miscellaneous Documents, 40 Congress, 2 session, no. 4, in Ramsey Papers.

that the United States would pay six million dollars for the lands of the Hudson's Bay Company. Ramsey's bill was not passed. However, it was an indication that Minnesota was about to take a stand on the matter of the annexation of the British Northwest.

Recent events related to the British Northwest apparently helped to touch off action by the legislature of Minnesota. The British North America Act had been passed in 1867. This Act provided for the admission of the British Northwest to Canada following an agreement on the terms of the transfer. The Minnesota legislature now went on record to state that the principle of self-government had not been permitted to operate, for the Act had been passed without consulting the people of the Red River Settlement. This action by Britain was made to appear more serious because, as the legislature maintained, the population of the Settlement consisted largely of emigrants from the United States. Although this last point was not true, it seems that Americans generally believed it. None the less, these statements were made by the Minnesota legislature in March, 1868, in a resolution to Congress, urging the annexation of the British Northwest.⁸ Congress had the resolution printed but remained indifferent to it.⁹ And with that, Minnesota was to leave the matter of annexation rest for a while.

8. Minnesota General Laws, 10 session, March, 1868.

9. D. F. Warner, The Idea of Continental Union (University of Kentucky Press, 1960), p. 111.

But all this annexation talk had not gone without comment from the people of the Red River Settlement. Until 1864 the Nor'Wester had frequently come out with editorials on the Americanization of Red River. Then, in that year, when John Christian Schultz bought a share in the Nor'Wester, the tone of the paper changed in this respect. The Nor'Wester said that no one in the Settlement was interested in union with the United States.¹⁰ It appeared that Schultz now tried to correct the erroneous impression that the Nor'Wester had formerly created. However, just as the matter of Americanization had been greatly overstated before, so Schultz now exaggerated the anti-American sentiment in Red River. And by 1867 Norman W. Kittson, who was no annexationist, was convinced that the "strong editorials" of the Nor'Wester could only harm the relations between St. Paul and Red River.¹¹ Kittson went so far as to say that the course Schultz was taking might possibly lead to a restriction "on the privilege of bonding goods."¹² Whether Kittson was unduly alarmed is not certain. But Kittson who had become as at home in Red River as he was in St. Paul was particularly sensitive to anything that might disrupt the trade between the two places. Moreover, as special agent of the

10. Nor'Wester, November 2, 1864.

11. P.A.M., E. L. Barber Papers, N. W. Kittson to E. L. Barber, April 30, 1867.

12. Ibid.

the Hudson's Bay Company in St. Paul, Kittson was carrying out his responsibilities to the satisfaction of the Company. It is also to be remembered that the Hudson's Bay Company was still transporting its goods in bond through the United States by the St. Paul route; the same was true of the private traders and their imports.

But it wasn't Kittson who got the Nor'Wester to explain the enigmatic course that it was or had been following in regard to American influence. In March, 1868, after the Minnesota legislature had passed the resolution calling for the annexation of the British Northwest, an editorial in the Nor'Wester tried to clear up the confusion on the attitude of the people of the Red River towards this matter.¹³ If there had ever been any desire by the Red River people to be annexed to the United States, the Nor'Wester said, then it had been for two reasons. First, the desire, which was not general, had arisen from a feeling of despair of being able to arouse the British government from its indifference. Secondly, the whole idea of annexation had been used by the Nor'Wester as a means "to hurry on the action of our Home Authorities."¹⁴ The Nor'Wester, then, had stated its position and had also attempted to indicate the

13. Nor'Wester, March 30, 1868

14. Ibid.

attitude of the Red River people to the idea of union with the United States. That this was a full and accurate explanation was not to be expected. While it was reasonably accurate, it was also very general. There were already a number of Americans living in Red River. But at this time their influence was still somewhat obscure. The discovery as to how this influence would work itself out had to await future events.

Governor Mactavish was one who expressed strong doubts on the matter of the future of Red River. In the first place, he was worried that the extensive use of the St. Paul route by the Settlement and the Hudson's Bay Company would only bring in more Americans. Therefore, if it had been possible to avoid passing the Company's goods through the United States in exchange for an equally advantageous route, Mactavish would have advised it. But few would believe that Red River had a more practicable route than the one by way of St. Paul. Thus, apparently overcome by the helplessness of his position, Mactavish thought that the best way out for the Hudson's Bay Company was "to sell the Territory to the Yankees as soon as the Dakotah fills up."¹⁵ This opinion, expressed by Mactavish in 1867, was informed by the belief that England could not hold the Northwest any longer than the Americans chose to allow.¹⁶ The fact that Mactavish was both overworked and not well probably helped to produce

15. A.H.B.C., A. 12/44, Mactavish to Smith, May 29, 1867.

16. Ibid.

this feeling of resignation. On the other hand, if others in Red River held the same views, which is not unlikely, it was little wonder.

Meantime, trade between Red River and St. Paul had continued. And by the summer of 1868, the commercial ties with Red River had again emerged as the main interest of Minnesota in the Settlement. This was demonstrated particularly when St. Paul gave economic assistance to Red River in that year.

The disaster that struck the Red River Settlement in 1868 had been apprehended by Governor Mactavish in the previous fall. In 1867 the grasshoppers had done considerable damage to the crops of Red River and had laid their eggs in the soil of the river lots.¹⁷ By July, 1868, the crops of the Settlement had been completely destroyed by the grasshoppers.¹⁸ The buffalo hunt had also been unsuccessful, and so there were no plain provisions. Mactavish wrote that "not an ounce of pemmican" had been procured that summer.¹⁹ To make the disaster more complete, the fisheries, the third main source of food in Red River, had also failed. Even the rabbits and the pheasants had disappeared.²⁰ Unless help was received, many families in the Settlement would be faced with starvation during the coming winter.

17. A.H.B.C., A. 12/44, Mactavish to Smith, September 5, 1867.

18. Ibid., A. 12/45, Mactavish to Smith, July 27, 1868.

19. Ibid., A. 12/45, Mactavish to Smith, August 11, 1868.

20. Hargrave, Red River, p. 447.

The call of the Nor'Wester for relief in August brought contributions of £ 3000 from England, \$3600 from Canada, and the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce raised and contributed a sum of \$4,332.²¹ The Council of Assiniboia voted a sum of £1600 for the relief of the settlers.²² The funds from Britain, Canada, Minnesota, and the Hudson's Bay Company indicated the fourfold interest in the Red River Settlement. In this case, however, the degree of interest cannot be measured by the amount of each contribution. Nor would such a comparison be of great importance here.

However, in this study it is significant to note the nature of the response from the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce. Although the Council of Assiniboia was the first to make its contribution, the Nor'Wester gratefully observed that the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce had acted on the appeal from Red River immediately. A sum of \$1,137.25 had been raised at the first meeting.²³ Some of the subscribers and their donations were: R. Blakely, \$100; J.J. Hill, \$200; A. Ramsey, \$50; Governor W. R. Marshall, \$50; N. W. Kittson, \$50; J. C. Burbank, \$100; and J. L. Marriam, \$100.²⁴ Outside of Senator Ramsey and Governor Marshall, all the above mentioned contributors were, directly or indirectly, interested in the carrying trade to Red River. Then the chamber of commerce appointed a committee to be in charge of the arrangements for relief. This committee proceeded to canvass St. Paul for more funds, and made an

21. Ibid., p. 448; St. Paul Weekly Press, December 2, 1869.

22. Council of Assinibioa, Minutes, August 10, 1868.

23. Nor'Wester, September 22, 1868

24. Ibid.

appeal to other American cities on behalf of the Red River Settlement. Among others, two members of the relief committee in St. Paul were H. H. Sibley and N. W. Kittson. It was obvious that Kittson had become an important link in the relations between St. Paul and Red River. It was also evident that the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce had put forth these efforts largely because it was closely allied to Red River commercially.²⁵

The disaster at Red River also illustrated how the trade of St. Paul with the Settlement was of mutual benefit to both. The Red River Co-operative Relief Committee, which had been organized to buy provisions and distribute these to the settlers, made arrangements to purchase seed wheat and flour in St. Paul. By October Norman Kittson had bought 435 bushels of wheat and 285 barrels of flour and had sent the supplies on to Red River.²⁶ It is noteworthy that the troops at Fort Abercrombie stored the relief supplies at the fort for some time without charge. St. Paul friends were happy to learn that the distress in Red River had to some extent been overcome.²⁷

Such, then, was the friendly note of the relations that existed between St. Paul and the Red River Settlement at the close of 1868. Based primarily on the trans-border trade and on the communications of Red

25. St. Paul Daily Dispatch in Nor'Wester, September 22, 1868.

26. Council of Assiniboia, Minutes, October 19, 1868.

27. St. Paul Weekly Pioneer, October 2, 1868.

River by way of St. Paul, these relations represented the real connection between the Settlement and Minnesota. And this connection had firmly linked the two communities for over a decade now. Despite the fact that the two communities had not been drawn together politically, the last two years had witnessed a growing American interest in the annexation of the British Northwest. But in the latter part of 1868, the idea of annexation had found little support in the United States. Moreover, by that year it was generally recognized by all parties concerned that Rupert's Land would likely be transferred to Canada. Thus the end of 1868 saw the Red River Settlement allied to Minnesota commercially, and moving towards Canada politically.

CHAPTER VIII

INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY, AMERICAN CONSULATE, 1869

Although Americans were anticipating that the British Northwest would become part of Canada, they did not lose interest in the Red River Settlement. Besides the trade of Minnesota with Red River, this interest was demonstrated in at least two ways in 1869. In the first place, the indefatigable James Wickes Taylor once more revived the idea of an international railway through Red River to the Pacific. Secondly, an American consulate was established in the Red River Settlement. With negotiations for the transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada being carried forward by Canada, Britain, and the Hudson's Bay Company, the year 1869 promised to be an eventful one for Red River.

Taylor's idea of an international railway was not new. It had been one of the main themes of his report to the Minnesota House of Representatives in 1860. At that time the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce had shown considerable interest in the proposed line. Toronto, however, was less enthusiastic. The fact was that both cities were financially unable to take up the costly enterprise. Furthermore, as long as the Hudson's Bay Company rule had extended over the Northwest, both railways and settlement had not been encouraged. But now, in 1869, it appeared certain that the Northwest would at last be opened to settlement.

Meantime, Taylor had been in constant touch with the railway development in the United States.¹ In 1867 he had represented the Northern Pacific Railroad at business conventions in eastern American cities. Then, in 1869, Taylor began to do some work as a press agent for the Northern Pacific. Moreover, he was still giving needed publicity to the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad, which in 1864 had been reorganized under the First Division of the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad. Thus Taylor was in contact with eastern railway interests, as well as those of the American Northwest.

To promote the project of an international Pacific line, Taylor appealed to the United States government and American railway interests, Canada, and the Hudson's Bay Company. His approach varied according to the special interests of each party.

If the line was to succeed at all, it would have to have the support of the Philadelphia banker, Jay Cooke, who had undertaken to promote the Northern Pacific in the spring of 1869. Early in May Taylor wrote to Cooke, outlining the way in which the interests of the Northern Pacific would be served by an international line.² In the first place,

1. Irwin, Pacific Railways and Nationalism in the Canadian-American Northwest, 1845-1873, p. 129.

2. Taylor Papers, Taylor to Jay Cooke, May 5, 1869.

Taylor argued, Canada had no choice but to build a railway from Fort Garry to the Pacific Coast; if this measure was declined by Canada, the Canadian West would declare for annexation to the United States. Taylor emphasized this point by saying that "a railroad is the sole and imperative condition of English dominion in the Northwest."³ Furthermore, Taylor was convinced that the eastward extension of this line to Canada by a route north of Lake Superior would not take place within the century. Therefore, the Canadian line would have to depend upon the Northern Pacific for an outlet at Fort Garry. On the other hand, there was still the possibility that the United States would demand that Britain cede the territory west of ninety degrees longitude in settlement of the Alabama claims. Should this occur, the route of the Northern Pacific would likely pass through northern Minnesota, Fort Garry, and by the Saskatchewan valley to the Pacific. According to this reasoning, the Northern Pacific would draw the trade and wealth from the Northwest regardless of whether the territory was in Canadian or American hands. These seemed to be convincing arguments, but it was not certain that they would persuade Jay Cooke to begin construction of the line from the East.

The idea of an international railway was also of importance to Minnesota. By 1867 the First Division of the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad had completed its line to St. Cloud. From here the railway was now being projected in a northwesterly direction towards Breckenridge on the Red River of the North. And from Breckenridge the St. Paul and Pacific hoped to run its line north to Fort Garry.

3. Ibid.

Therefore, Taylor was also in contact with the president, G. L. Becker, and the vice-president, E. D. Litchfield, of the St. Paul and Pacific.⁴ Minnesota had been drawing the trade from the Red River region by means of Red River carts and by steamboat; now it saw prospects of doing this by a railway.

Taylor had not forgotten to write President Ulysses S. Grant on the subject of an international railway.⁵ Since Grant was an expansionist,⁶ Taylor counted on some support from this quarter.

However, Canada would also have to be won over to the idea of an international route. In a letter to Joseph Howe, Taylor put emphasis on what he called his "Canadian policy." Taylor said that he had "come to regard Confederation as a fact accomplished, which England will not recall."⁷ He pointed out to Howe that Canada would be well advised to limit construction of the railway to the section between Fort Garry and the Pacific. The railroads of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota would assume responsibility for the eastern section between Sarnia and the Red River Settlement. But Howe's reply to this proposal was discouraging.⁸ C. J. Brydges, manager of the Grand Trunk Railway, was

4. Taylor Papers, Taylor to E. D. Litchfield, May 5, 1869.

5. Ibid.

6. Warner, The Idea of Continental Union, p. 96.

7. Taylor Papers, Taylor to J. Howe, May 4, 1869.

8. Ibid., Howe to Taylor, May 24, 1869.

no more hopeful.⁹ Thus Canadians did not seem to favour the proposed international line. Nor was it any wonder, for John A. Macdonald was convinced that a Pacific railway by an all-Canadian route was the only way to hold the West.

But James Taylor had also approached the Hudson's Bay Company through Norman W. Kittson.¹⁰ Taylor's international line was to run west from Lake Superior to about the area of Breckenridge, from where it would follow the cart trail to Fort Garry. Thus the St. Paul route would become still more advantageous to the Company. Of course, Taylor did not exclude the idea that the whole Northwest might be ceded by Britain to the United States. In that event, he thought that a clause could be inserted in the treaty, giving the Hudson's Bay Company five million dollars for its lands.¹¹ But when the Hudson's Bay Company did not reply immediately, Taylor offered his services to the Company in more specific terms.¹² For a salary of fifty dollars per month, he declared himself willing to represent the Company's interests in any negotiations that might involve the United States. Taylor had also discussed the matter personally with Governor Mactavish, but the latter had not committed the Company in any way.¹³

9. Ibid., C. J. Brydges to Taylor, May, 19, 1869.

10. A.H.B.C., A. 12/45, Taylor to Kittson, May 15, 1869.

11. Ibid.

12. A.H.B.C., A. 12/45, Taylor to Kittson, June 7, 1869.

13. Ibid., A. 12/45, Mactavish to Smith, June 7, 1869.

And by August, it was apparent that the governor and committee in London had not accepted the services of Taylor.¹⁴

By the fall of 1869, the chances of an international railway through the Red River Settlement were quite remote, if, indeed, they had ever been more than that. Jay Cooke had still not decided to support the line. Taylor wrote G. L. Becker that the responses from all the "parties were not encouraging."¹⁵ However, Taylor was not to be discouraged so easily. If the idea of an international route had met with failure, American railways could still hope to draw trade from the Canadian West.

Meanwhile, the United States government had been taking steps to appoint an American consul at Winnipeg, the commercial centre in the Red River Settlement. When this news reached Red River, there was immediate speculation as to who would receive the appointment. It appears that the Canadian party was most concerned. Walter Robert Bown, who had taken over the Nor'Wester from Schultz in 1868, expressed his concern to Senator Alexander Ramsey in a letter early in 1869.¹⁶ Bown informed Ramsey that the half-breeds had been holding secret meetings for the past two months. These meetings had taken place after John A. Snow's party of Canadian workmen arrived in Red River in the fall of 1868. The Canadian government had sent Snow

14. Ibid., A. 12/45, Mactavish to Smith, August 24, 1869.

15. Taylor Papers, Taylor to G. L. Becker, October 23, 1869.

16. Ramsey Papers, W. R. Bown to Ramsey, February 23, 1869.

west to begin the construction of a road between Fort Garry and the Lake of the Woods.¹⁷ The association of the workmen with the Canadian party in Red River had aroused the suspicion of the half-breeds. The fact that actual meetings were being held was probably due to the return of the younger Louis Riel to Red River in the summer of 1868. Because of this new unrest in the Settlement, Bown recommended to Ramsey that an American citizen resident in Red River should be appointed as the consular agent. Such a person would have the possible advantage of having a quietening influence over the half-breeds. The person whom Bown suggested was William Gomez Fonseca.

In the hope of getting the position of the new consulate, Fonseca had also written to Ramsey. Fonseca felt that he could help to avoid a collision between the métis and the English settlers because he was acquainted with the circumstances in Red River. Moreover, Fonseca thought that he was particularly well fitted for the post because he was related to the half-breeds through his wife.¹⁸ There were others who were hoping that Fonseca would get the appointment. One was the

17. Although Governor Mactavish thought that the road would not amount to much, he felt that the Hudson's Bay Company might still be able to make some use of it. See A.H.B.C., A. 11/98, Mactavish to Gov. and Comm., November 11, 1868.

18. Ramsey Papers, W. G. Fonseca to Ramsey, February 23, 1869. Fonseca had written Ramsey that the half-breeds were about to elect a president to secure unity of action. According to Fonseca, the person whom the half-breeds had in mind for this position was the Uncle of Mrs. Fonseca. It would seem likely, though no evidence has been found, that this person was John Bruce.

Bishop of Rupert's Land,¹⁹ and another was Archdeacon John McLean, Warden of St. John's College. There appear to be several reasons why the Canadian party as well as others in Red River were so much in favour of Fonseca. First, it was obvious that Fonseca was not an annexationist. Second, he was on friendly terms with the Canadians. Should Fonseca receive the appointment, there seemed to be less possibility that the Americans in the Settlement would interfere in the coming events.

However, a number of Americans in Red River were against the proposed appointment of Fonseca. This did not mean that they were all annexationists. In a letter to the Nor'Wester which was signed by twenty American citizens their position was partly made clear.²⁰ In the first place, they did not think that Fonseca would give satisfaction either to the United States government or to the Americans in Red River. Furthermore, they maintained that the Americans in Red River were not as numerous as the Nor'Wester had seemed to imply. The Americans were naturally drawn together by their common citizenship. But what they were mainly concerned about now was that the American consul, whoever he might be, would fairly look after their interests as American citizens.

19. Ibid., Bishop of Rupert's Land to Ramsey, April 3, 1869.

20. Nor'Wester, April 3, 1869.

The letter had been signed by: H. W. Hanford, E. L. Barber, H. F. O'Lone, R. H. McLaughlin, H. Eck, W. Porter, J. Treston, G. Moser, G. B. Winship, P. Morneau, R. C. Burdick, A. H. Scott, H. S. Donaldson, A. R. Gerald, J. C. Kennedy, W. H. Cosgrove, J. Lennon, R. Patterson, G. Emmerling, and J. Grimshall.

Only one of the Americans who had signed the letter to the Nor'Wester was reported to have openly advocated annexation to the United States.²¹ This was George Emmerling. It was Emmerling, in a letter to Oscar Malmros, the person actually to become first American consul at Winnipeg, who revealed another reason why the Americans objected to Fonseca.²² Emmerling believed that the Canadian party would use Fonseca to further union with Canada. Therefore, Malmros was urged to defeat the appointment of Fonseca. This letter was then passed on to Senator Ramsey by Malmros. Whether this letter was a decisive factor in dropping Fonseca is not certain. Perhaps Ramsey never considered the Canadian party's choice seriously. Nevertheless, by the end of June Malmros had accepted the American consulship at Winnipeg.²³

Oscar Malmros had resided in St. Paul since 1853, and had served under General H. H. Sibley in the Sioux campaigns.²⁴ It would seem, therefore, that Malmros had some knowledge of Red River before he arrived in the village of Winnipeg on August 13, 1869. The Americans in the Settlement celebrated his arrival by raising the American flag and by a gun salute. They were not the only ones to welcome him. Malmros reported that the "subjects of the colony" had

21. Hargrave, Red River, p. 402.

22. Ramsey Papers, G. Emmerling to O. Malmros, April 3, 1869.

23. Taylor Papers, J. C. B. Davis to Malmros, June 24, 1869.

24. Morton, ed., Alexander Begg's Journal and Other Papers Relative to the Red River Resistance, p. 187.

had honoured his arrival "by raising the Dominion flag!".²⁵ And soon he was discharging his official duties at the consular office in Emmerling's Hotel.²⁶

Thus by the fall of 1869, American interest in Red River had further been manifested by the opening of a consulate in Winnipeg. This step took into account the fact that there were American citizens with commercial interests in the Settlement. In present circumstances, however, when Rupert's Land was on the eve of being transferred to Canada, the new consulate could possibly have a broader meaning. But this was to remain somewhat obscure, at least in the beginning. Also of American origin, at this time, had been the idea of an international railway through Red River. Although the idea had not come to fruition, it had anticipated trade between the United States and a Canadian West. And this commerce was to be channeled, in part, along the St. Paul route. But even if the international line had failed, the approach of American railways indicated that the north-south flow of trade would probably continue.

25. P.A.M., Department of State, Consular Despatches, Winnipeg, I, Malmros to Sec. of State, August 15, 1869.

26. Nor'Wester, August 24, 1869.

CHAPTER IX

THE ST. PAUL ROUTE REMAINS AN ECONOMIC CONNECTION, 1869-1870

From the last months in 1869 through the first part of 1870, American interest in the Red River Settlement reached a new peak. Until this time Americans had reason to believe that the north-south trade in Red River valley would remain an international one. Negotiations for the transfer of the British Northwest to Canada had almost been completed. December 1, 1869, had been set as the date when the transfer would become effective. Minnesota was looking forward to an increased trade with the Red River region, which was soon to be opened to settlement by Canada. But when the Red River métis rose to resist the transfer to Canada, American interest turned, though only in part, to annexation. The American annexationist hopes, which were never to be organized into a united movement, were based mainly on two things. In the first place, it was thought, or hoped, that the métis resistance was really a movement to have Red River annexed to the United States. Secondly, a number of Americans believed that the St. Paul route had operated to Americanize the Red River people. The coming events were to disclose, however, that the Red River people, although they were content to maintain their economic relations with Minnesota, were not desirous of political union with the United States.

On October 19, 1869, the métis closed the St. Paul route. A barrier

was erected at the Rivière Sale in the vicinity of St. Norbert. The road to Pembina was blocked by armed métis. This action, however, was not meant to break off relations with St. Paul. Rather the barrier was intended to prevent the entry of William McDougall, who had been appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Territory, into the Settlement. And on October 31, an armed party escorted McDougall across the boundary to Pembina.

The stopping of McDougall had been directed by Louis Riel, secretary of the newly organized National Committee of the métis. A native of Red River, educated in Montreal, and with two years residence in the United States, the twenty-four year old Riel now assumed the leadership of the métis resistance. The reasons for the resistance were clearly stated by Riel at a meeting of the Council of Assiniboia. First, Riel said, the métis, "objected to any Government coming from Canada without their being consulted in the matter."¹ Second, admittance would only be granted to a Governor from Canada on the condition that Canadian delegates would be sent to negotiate with the Red River people "the terms" under which the new government was to be established.² But there was another reason for the outbreak of the métis disturbances. This was explained by Governor Mactavish. He said that the half-breeds' distrust had arisen from their belief "that every Canadian official as he

1. Council of Assiniboia, Minutes, October 25, 1869.

2. Ibid.

arrived was too intimate with Doctor Schultz and his party."³ Because the métis did not trust Schultz, they were suspicious of any Canadians who appeared to be on friendly terms with him. Here, then, were the causes of the resistance to Canada. It was also clear that Riel intended to open negotiations with Canada.

But Oscar Malmros, the American consul, was not disposed to understand the intent of the métis resistance in this way. He wrote the assistant secretary of state, J. C. B. Davis, that "in a short time the country will be a unit in a favour of independence i.e. annexation to the U.S."⁴ Such news was to get a mixed reception in Washington and in St. Paul.

In Washington Senator Ramsey, early in December, introduced a resolution whereby the President was asked to communicate to the Senate information related to McDougall's presence at Pembina and the resistance of the half-breeds.⁵ Ramsey tried to create enthusiasm for his motion by pointing out that Minnesota carried on an extensive trade with the Red River people. Therefore, the troubles in the Settlement were of considerable importance to the United States. On the other hand, Senator Howard thought that the transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada did not involve the United States in any way. Furthermore, he said that "the less we have to do with the subject the better it will be for all parties."⁶ Senator

3. A.H.B.C., A. 12/45, Mactavish to Smith, September 7, 1869.

4. Department of State, Consular Despatches, Winnipeg, I, Malmros, to Davis, November 6, 1869.

5. Congressional Globe, 41 Congress, 2 session, part 1, p. 3.

6. Ibid., pp. 29-30.

Charles Sumner, who had earlier suggested that Britain cede Canada to the United States, at first objected to Ramsey's motion but later agreed to it. Sumner was an Eastern expansionist, and he did not seem to be very interested in the British Northwest. That the annexation feeling in the United States was sectional was only too obvious.⁷ Nevertheless, the resolution was passed, but Congress did nothing with the information submitted by President Grant.

However, Washington was not to remain wholly indifferent to the events at Red River. On December 30, 1869, James Wickes Taylor was appointed special agent of the State Department for a period of six months.⁸ Among the numerous duties assigned to him, Taylor was to inform Hamilton Fish, the Secretary of State, on details of the Red River resistance and the communication routes of the Settlement. Under no circumstances, however, was Taylor to make any of this information public. His secret commission, then, was intended to keep the administration in Washington quietly informed on the affairs at Red River.

In St. Paul interest in the métis resistance ran high. On the evening of December 1, 1869, the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce held a public meeting in Ingersoll Hall to discuss this question.⁹ The meeting was chaired by J. C. Burbank, president of the chamber of commerce. In his opening remarks, Burbank reminded the crowded hall of two of the many

7. Warner, The Idea of Continental Union, p. 141.

8. Taylor Papers, Hamilton Fish to Taylor, December 30, 1869.

9. St. Paul Weekly Press, December 2, 1869.

ways by which the chamber of commerce had shown an interest in Red River in the past. One was the opening of steam navigation on the Red in 1859, and the second was the relief funds that had been sent to the Settlement in the fall and winter of 1868.¹⁰ However, Burbank gave no indication that he was interested in the annexation of the Red River region. At the same time he realized that there were two sides to the question. Therefore, the rest of that evening was devoted to listening to the annexationist speech of Ignatius Donnelly. According to Burbank, the other point of view was also to be heard. However, it has proved impossible to find any evidence of a second meeting where this was to be done. Despite the fact that there might not have been another meeting, it would seem reasonable to conclude from Burbank's remarks that part of the audience, at least, was interested in Red River mainly for commercial reasons. Moreover, it would appear that Burbank was not an annexationist. It is not easy to discern where one interest stops and the other begins. But if one may judge by the general behaviour of Burbank in the Red River carrying trade, then he must have been motivated largely by business interests. It should also be remembered that Donnelly was not alone in his drive for annexation. What Donnelly was not able to accomplish by his oratory, Joseph Wheelock, editor of the St. Paul Daily Press, tried to do by his strong annexationist editorials.

There were other American newspapers that were urging annexation. One of these was the New York Times. It pointed out that American influences had been operating in the Red River region for a long time.

10. Ibid.

Minnesota had established the means of communication to Red River. The stage coach and the steamboat had provided the Settlement with transportation facilities for both mails and commerce. All these, said the Times, "are powerful agencies in the work of Americanizing the people."¹¹ Therefore, it concluded, allowance would have to be made for these influences when the causes of the métis resistance were being considered. This idea of Americanization, of course, was that which the Nor!Wester had been printing until 1864. But whereas the Red River newspaper had used it to produce action from Britain and Canada, the Times was now using the same argument to inspire American annexationists.

Such were a few of the early comments and the first reactions to the Red River resistance from the United States. It was clear that American interest was of a diversified nature. In Washington Senator Ramsey was attempting to enlist support for a stronger annexation policy. The Grant administration was interested, but it wished to remain a quiet observer. In St. Paul the interest ranged from the outspoken annexationism of Donnelly and Wheelock to the less noisy, but more enduring, commercial interests of the St. Paul merchants. What they all had in common, though, was that in the final analysis the wishes of the Red River people would still be respected.

But in Red River a cloud seemed to hang over the real course that the people were following. In retrospect it is not difficult to see that Riel and the provisional government, which had been set up in February, 1870, were all along slowly proceeding in their negotiations

11. New York Times, in Toronto Globe, December 30, 1869.

with Canada. Nor had Canada failed to respond. One of the first important steps of the Canadian government had been to order the recall of William McDougall. Then, in January, the delegates of the Canadian government, Colonel de Salaberry, Grand Vicar Thibault, and Donald A. Smith of the Hudson's Bay Company, had assured the Red River people that Canada intended to treat liberally with them. By the end of March the provisional government had sent its representatives, Judge John Black, Father N. J. Ritchot, and Alfred H. Scott, with a list of rights to Ottawa. In Ottawa the terms of the transfer, which had not taken place on December 1, 1869, were incorporated in the Manitoba bill in May, 1870. And on July 15, by the proclamation of the Manitoba Act, the Red River Settlement became part of the province of Manitoba.

Before all this had come to pass, however, the Americans in the Settlement had taken an active interest in the hotly debated issues of that cold winter in Red River. The main persons who seemed to be, directly or indirectly, involved in promoting a necessarily restrained annexation policy were Oscar Malmros, Major Henry M. Robinson, and William B. O'Donoghue.

Oscar Malmros was obliged to exercise the greatest restraint. His success in maintaining this attitude, however, was greater at the beginning of the resistance than later on. In November, 1869, Malmros wrote that he had "continued to observe perfect neutrality in relation to the politics of this country."¹² Moreover, he had advised the Americans in

12. Department of State, Consular Despatches, Winnipeg, I, Malmros to Davis, November 6, 1869.

the Settlement not to interfere in the political affairs of Red River. Alexander Begg noted in his Journal that the American consul had tried to convince Riel to allow the Hudson's Bay Company government to continue until the transfer took place.¹³ But by the end of December, Begg suspected that Malmros was working with Riel's party.¹⁴ Malmros had failed to comprehend the true purpose of Riel, and, therefore, the consul was encouraged to hope for annexation to the United States. To Senator Ramsey, Malmros admitted that he was "more than a mere looker on;" however, if annexation should be achieved, the consul's position would not permit him to claim any credit for his "share in the work".¹⁵ Malmros had contributed to the cause by dictating the editorials on annexation in the first issues of the New Nation, the newspaper which had appeared when Riel suppressed the Nor'Wester.¹⁶

However, the double role that Malmros was playing soon led to frustration. In the first place, his expectation that the Department of State would allow him to act in a political capacity was not realized.¹⁷ Secondly, Malmros was not granted permission to recognize Riel's provisional government as the official governing body in Red River.¹⁸ Finally, the consul's position had become intolerable when

13. Morton, ed., Alexander Begg's Journal and Other Papers Relative to the Red River Resistance, p. 187.

14. Ibid., p. 245.

15. Ramsey Papers, Malmros to Ramsey, January 6, 1870.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Department of State, Consular Despatches, Winnipeg, I, Malmros to Davis, March 12, 1870; Taylor Papers, Davis to Malmros, April 6, 1870.

the Department of State published some of his letters from Red River.¹⁹ On March 16, 1870, Malmros left the Settlement, and through the influence of Senator Ramsey was transferred to the American consulate in Pictou, Nova Scotia.²⁰

Major H. M. Robinson, who was now appointed the vice-consul in Winnipeg, had briefly urged annexation to the United States upon being made the first editor of the New Nation. His editorials, which had been written with the help of Malmros, were based on the familiar idea that the communications system of Red River through Minnesota indicated the manifest destiny of the Settlement.²¹ But soon Riel had brought the paper under his control and had suppressed all articles that favoured annexation. And by the end of March, the editorship of the New Nation had passed to Thomas Spence. Since the new editor was a Canadian, there was little danger that the idea of union with the American Republic would find its way into the pages of the New Nation. Furthermore, Robinson, in the American consulate, was content to restrict himself to serving the commercial interests of the American citizens. He had thought that Riel intended to declare for annexation to the United States, but this had proved to be an illusory hope.

In fact, it had been evident by the middle of January that Riel had largely rejected the annexationist overtures from the Americans.²²

19. Ramsey Papers, Malmros to Ramsey, March 15, 1870.

20. M.H.S., Diary of Alexander Ramsey, May 17, 1870.

21. New Nation, January 7, 1870; January 14, 1870; January 21, 1870.

22. Morton, op. cit., pp. 87-88, 261.

This did not mean that he was on unfriendly terms with them after that. On the contrary, Riel valued their friendship. Riel assured Donald A. Smith that although he had not been led by the Americans, they had been "better friends" than the Canadians.²³ Nor was Riel opposed to giving his American friends official duties in Red River during this time. William B. O'Donoghue, who had come to St. Boniface as a school teacher in 1868, became the treasurer of the provisional government. Although O'Donoghue had spoken for annexation to the United States at the Fort Garry convention, Riel had not been much disturbed by this lone voice.²⁴ But in April, when Riel had given orders to have the Union Jack flown at Fort Garry, O'Donoghue had promptly ordered it to be taken down. The outcome of this dispute, in which O'Donoghue's annexationist activities were sharply criticized by Riel, was that the British flag remained on the flagstaff.²⁵ Now all Red River could see that Louis Riel, who had often declared his loyalty as a British subject but had not always been believed, was openly signifying that he was loyal to the British Crown. The friendship between Riel and O'Donoghue had not been broken, but it was more strained after this.

23. Canada: Sessional Papers, III, no. 12, 1870, Report of Donald A. Smith, April 12, 1870.

24. New Nation, February 11, 1870.

25. Morton, op. cit., p. 360.

On the fringes of this small group of annexationists were such men as Captain H. S. Donaldson and George Emmerling. Captain Donaldson had taken part in the Sioux campaign in Minnesota, during which time he had paid a number of visits to the Red River Settlement. Later he had come to live in Red River. Donaldson identified himself as an annexationist, but his influence or efforts in this direction do not seem to have been very great. Emmerling, on the other hand, must have had considerable influence on the Americans who chose to make his hotel a gathering place. The American flag flying from the hotel left no doubt as to the sympathies of George Emmerling.

It is to be remembered, though, that the relations between Americans and the Red River people were generally friendly. This goodwill, however, was not based on common political aims; it was more related to the economic activities in Red River. E. L. Barber and W. G. Fonseca were two American merchants who had traded in Red River since the beginning of the 1860's. Barber had built up a small trade in the Settlement, and his carts were a familiar sight on the St. Paul route. There is evidence that Barber was a friend of James Ross who was working for union with Canada.²⁶ But this does not mean that Barber took part in the movement for union with Canada. Nor does he appear to have attempted to further annexation to the United States. By taking a neutral stand, American merchants in Red River had the

26. Barber Papers, J. Ross to E. L. Barber, September 17, 1870.

best opportunity of prospering. Fonseca was another American who had gradually expanded his trade in Red River. But Fonseca, while he was a loyal American citizen, was not against entering into activities by which the Red River people indicated their loyalty to the British Crown. On January 24, 1870, he was the secretary of a meeting held in St. John's School, where the people adopted a resolution declaring their allegiance to England.²⁷ No doubt Fonseca's part in this was simply a gesture showing his intention to live peaceably in Red River. It was these American merchants, who evidently remained quiet during the whole resistance, that were probably a greater influence on the Red River people than the small group of annexationists in Winnipeg. Moreover, some American merchants were quite content to remain in Red River after it was united with Canada. For example, Fonseca stayed and built up an extensive business. On the other hand, George Emmerling sold his hotel in the summer of 1870, and it appears that he soon left Red River. In a sense the departure of some of these annexationists was symbolic of the failure of Red River to respond to the appeal of political union to the United States.

Not to be overlooked in the matter of American interest during this time was Pembina. But here, too, as in Red River, the Americans did not follow a common policy in regard to the métis resistance. First, there were a few annexationists, of whom Colonel Enos

27. P.A.M., Alexander Ross Family Papers, W. G. Fonseca to J. Ross, January 24, 1870.

Stutsman was chief. Stutsman had come to Pembina in 1866 as an agent of the United States Treasury Department. During the height of the resistance, Stutsman made a number of calls on Louis Riel at Fort Garry.²⁸ However, Stutsman's visits to the métis leader do not seem to have swayed Riel from his course. Furthermore, Stutsman was one of the correspondents for the St. Paul Daily Press. From the frequent, but distorted, accounts of the resistance that Stutsman sent to St. Paul, it was obvious that he was an annexationist. On the other hand, N. E. Nelson, the deputy collector of customs at Pembina, maintained a neutral position throughout the Red River troubles. Since Nelson was also given this testimony by William McDougall,²⁹ who no doubt was hypersensitive to American annexationists, the fact that Nelson's conduct was correct seems fairly certain.

The Americans in the Red River Settlement and in Pembina, then, were not one in their attitude towards the resistance. There had been some who had made a bold attempt to further annexation; these were Stutsman, Malmros, O'Donoghue, and Robinson. Even here there didn't seem to be any unity of action, and when the others had already ceased their efforts, O'Donoghue carried on alone. A number of Americans, though, had followed the early instructions of Malmros and had not become

28. Morton, op. cit., pp. 192, 237; P.A.M., Louis Riel Papers, Stutsman to "General", January 20, 1870.

29. Canada: Sessional Papers, III, no. 12, W. McDougall to N. E. Nelson, December 8, 1869.

involved. However, these had obviously been motivated by more than the words of precaution from Malmros. Barber and Fonseca, to mention only those of whom some evidence has been found, did not oppose union with Canada. Their main interest which was trade would be served regardless of whether the West was settled by Canadians or Americans. Furthermore, N. E. Nelson had helped to keep the border village of Pembina quiet. His official duties to his own government were performed efficiently and conscientiously; on the other hand, the fact that he had not given countenance to the métis resistance in any way was evidence of Nelson's correct behaviour. The outcome of the resistance, of course, did not solely depend on the attitude of the Americans in Pembina and Red River. Their presence was only one factor in the Red River troubles. Because the annexationists had made no great attempt to precipitate union with the United States, the importance of the American factor was further diminished. And by spring of 1870, annexation was little more than a lingering hope in the minds of a few Americans in Red River.

But the expansionists in the United States, who were farther removed from the facts, dared to hope awhile longer. What the Red River carts and the steamboat had not been able to achieve on the St. Paul route was now to be done by railways. An American rail connection with Red River might yet result in bringing the British Northwest into the political orbit of the United States. On April 24, 1870, a

party of Americans, representing the Northern Pacific Railroad, arrived in Red River.³⁰ The party was led by ex-Governor W. R. Marshall of Minnesota, and it included his brother-in-law, N. P. Langford. Marshall had been sent to Red River by Jay Cooke who had assumed the financial agency of the Northern Pacific by the beginning of 1870.³¹ Cooke had now decided to construct a line from a point some twenty-five miles west of Duluth to the Red River of the North at Georgetown.³² Furthermore, in the spring of 1870, the Northern Pacific had bought the controlling interest in the First Division of the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad. The St. Paul and Pacific which was planning to build to Pembina would thus provide the Northern Pacific with a branch line to draw trade from the Red River region.

During his stay in Red River, Marshall had paid formal visits to Louis Riel and Governor Mactavish.³³ What was said during Marshall's interview with Mactavish is not known. But Riel had given the American party to understand that the Red River people did not desire to be annexed to the United States.³⁴ Marshall had also talked to O'Donoghue. It was not long before O'Donoghue had admitted that he had

30. Morton, op. cit., pp. 362-363.

31. Taylor Papers, Taylor to C. J. Brydges, January 12, 1870.

32. Ibid.

33. New Nation, April 29, 1870.

34. Taylor Papers, N. P. Langford to Taylor, July 10, 1870.

not dropped the idea of annexation. But if the Canadian government granted favourable terms to Red River, O'Donoghue felt that he must "keep good faith with Canada."³⁵ Thus the Marshall party left the Settlement with the knowledge that the Red River people would probably not make any move to convert the St. Paul route into a political connection.

However, Senator Ramsey was not to be discouraged by this attitude in Red River. On May 16, 1870, Congress passed a bill granting lands to the First Division of the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad for the construction of a line to Pembina. Ramsey had been urging the passage of this bill for some time, and he thought that it would be "the best political stroke in the world."³⁶ James Wickes Taylor put the same idea in clearer terms. He was convinced that with the extension of this line to the forty-ninth parallel, "no Canadian scheme could prevent the Americanization of the Northwest."³⁷ These, then, were the hopes of the American expansionists as they made plans to push a railway to within easy reach of Red River. There still seemed to be a chance that the St. Paul route would be given a political character.

35. Ibid.

36. Congressional Globe, 41 Congress, 2 session, part 4, p. 3331.

37. P.A.M., Letters Received by State Department from Agent for Red River Affairs, Taylor to Fish, June 27, 1870.

But the Red River Settlement, as a British colony, was to be spared the political problems that the railways were to bring. These problems were to fall to the lot of the province of Manitoba.

Although the St. Paul route had not led to political ties between Minnesota and Red River, the possibility had, nevertheless, been a real one to the people of the Settlement. There is evidence that this had become a growing concern of Governor Mactavish. And on the eve of his departure from Red River in May, 1870, these thoughts were still strong in the mind of Mactavish. He wrote that British indifference had led the Red River people to expect that "the inevitable destiny of this country was politically linked with the United States."³⁸ This expectation had been strengthened because the "only connection" that Red River had with civilization was through American territory.³⁹

However, the people of Red River seemed to give little thought to the political implications of the St. Paul route as the spring trade opened in 1870. Negotiations with Canada were nearing their conclusion, and there was reason to believe that the political destiny of Red River was more or less settled. The main concern for many people was to get the economy of the Settlement moving again. During the métis resistance, the trade of the Hudson's Bay Company had been stopped. The economic consequences for Red River had been serious.

38. A.H.B.C., D. 10/1, Mactavish to J. Howe, May 14, 1870.

39. Ibid.

There was a desperate need to open the fur trade with the Indians, take the furs to St. Paul, and to return with food and other supplies. Therefore, early in April Riel had permitted the Hudson's Bay Company to resume business, and had declared that the public highways were open.⁴⁰

The St. Paul route had also been opened to travel and trade. Merchants in Red River were showing new signs of energy after the long, troublesome winter. The New Nation was hopeful that the first brigade of Red River carts would soon leave for St. Paul.⁴¹ On May 4, 1870, the International left Fort Garry to take the first cargo of furs to Georgetown. That summer was to see the steamboat making regular trips on the navigable part of the Red. Once more furs and buffalo robes were being transported by the St. Paul route to the markets of St. Paul and London. By July the transportation firm of J. J. Hill in St. Paul had received consignments of Red River furs amounting to about one hundred thousand dollars.⁴² Agricultural implements were again being purchased in St. Paul. On one trip the carts of A. G. B. Bannatyne and Alexander Begg arrived from St. Cloud with thirty ploughs.⁴³ Thus trade between Red River and St. Paul had taken on the

40. E. E. Rich, Hudson's Bay Company: 1670-1870, III (Toronto, 1960), p. 930.

41. New Nation, May 6, 1870.

42. Ibid., July 16, 1870.

43. Ibid., July 30, 1870.

well known rhythm of the 1860's.

But by the fall of 1870, the trans-border trade was being carried on in a new context. The Red River Settlement had legally become a part of Manitoba on July 15, 1870. But practically the province of Manitoba was confirmed by the arrival in Red River of Colonel Garnet Wolseley's expedition on August 23, and Adams G. Archibald, the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, on September 3. Politically, the Red River Settlement had been joined to Canada. But the economic ties of the new province of Manitoba were still, for the most part, with St. Paul. Therefore, one of the legacies that Manitoba inherited from the Red River Settlement was the St. Paul route. Because this route had remained an economic connection, there was no need to disrupt these commercial relations. In fact, they were vitally essential to Manitoba until a Canadian railway reached the West. But if the political union with Canada was to be a lasting one, then Manitoba would have to be drawn into an east-west trade. It was no wonder, then, that Governor Archibald announced that "new routes of communication" would soon be opened to the first province in the West. It is true that this promise was not to be realized immediately. But with the announcement of Governor Archibald, the history of the communications of Red River had entered a new phase.

44. A.H.B.C., A. 11/99, A. G. Archibald to the Council of Assiniboia, September 6, 1870.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion it may be said that the St. Paul route was of considerable importance to the Red River Settlement from 1859 to 1870. The geography of the Red River valley and the development of the American West had operated to make the southern route the main channel of communications of Red River with other parts of the world. In the first place, the people of Red River used this route to travel to the United States, Canada, and Britain. The few Canadian and American immigrants had come to Red River by way of St. Paul during these years. Second, the mails to and from the Red River Settlement were dependent on the United States mail service which had been extended to Pembina. Third, and perhaps most important, was the fact that St. Paul had become the economic outlet for the settlers and traders of Red River and for the Hudson's Bay Company.

It is significant that the Hudson's Bay Company was better able to sustain itself commercially because of this **supply** route through St. Paul. The commercial strength of the Company prevented and discouraged American traders from overrunning the British Northwest in great numbers. Furthermore, in these years the former alliance of the Red River free traders and the **American traders** against the Hudson's Bay Company largely disappeared. Instead, the interests of

the Company and the private traders of Red River were merged in the common effort to help the Red River Settlement to survive economically. The St. Paul route was really an example where the Hudson's Bay Company and the Red River people mutually drew on each other's resources. During most of the time the people of the Settlement found employment in carting to St. Paul for the Company; they were also able to have their freight carried on the Company's steamboat when it was running. On the other hand, the Hudson's Bay Company actually came to depend on the Red River carts for transportation.

But if a good relationship was noticeable between the people of Red River and the Hudson's Bay Company, then friendly relations also prevailed between St. Paul and Red River. The St. Paul merchants were not indifferent to the trans-border trade. Moreover, in St. Paul there was usually a general sympathy to the problems and difficulties of the British colony to the north. The people of Red River felt indebted to their southern neighbours for the communications of the Settlement through American territory and for the trade with St. Paul. These factors were the essence of the link between the two communities in this period.

The St. Paul route had helped to draw Red River out of its isolation to some degree. However, the St. Paul connection had not caused the people in Red River to forget their allegiance to the British Crown. That this allegiance had been sorely tried is true.

But this had not resulted from an admiration of the Red River people for the institutions of the United States. The seeming uncertainty as to which way the allegiance of Red River would turn was more a result of the internal political confusion of the Settlement. This confusion, of course, had stemmed from the indifferent attitude of Britain, and from the unfortunate way in which the transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada had been worked out.

Finally, the Red River Settlement had been helped to realize union with Canada partly by the fact that the St. Paul route had remained an economic connection. And after 1870, the implications of the commercial ties of Red River with St. Paul were no longer the problem of a neglected British colony. This had become a matter that the province of Manitoba was to work out with the federal government of Canada.

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS USED IN NOTES

A.H.B.C.	Archives of Hudson's Bay Company
M.H.S.	Minnesota Historical Society
P.A.C.	Public Archives of Canada
P.A.M.	Public Archives of Manitoba

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